Changing the Church
Transformations of Christian Belief, Practice, and Life

Edited by
Mark D. Chapman · Vladimir Latinovic

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Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue

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Volume in honor and remembrance of the late Prof. Gerard Mannion

(September 25, 1970–September 21, 2019)

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John Borelli received a doctorate in the history of religions and theology from Fordham University in 1976. After teaching for 12 years in New York, he served, from 1987 to 2003, at the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in ecumenical and interreligious affairs. In 2004, he began serving as special assistant for Catholic Identity and Dialogue for the President of Georgetown University. He has authored and coauthored 6 books and over 300 articles on ecumenism, interreligious relations, dialogue, and theological topics.

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Darren J. Dias is Associate Professor of Theology in the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto. He is the director of the Dominican Institute of Toronto where Gerard Mannion spent a semester as Aquinas Visiting Scholar in 2014. His research and teaching explore Trinitarian theology, religious diversity, theological method, and the intersection of lived experience and doctrine. He is an editor of *The Church and Migration: Global (In)Difference*.

Mary Doak PhD, teaches courses in Christian theology. Her specializations include liberation and political theologies, theologies of democracy and religious freedom, the goal of human life and history from a Christian perspective, and theologies of the church. Her research focus has been on the political and practical implications of Christian faith, especially in the contemporary context of the United States. Her research project explores the challenges to discipleship faced by the church in the twenty-first century.

Dennis M. Doyle received his PhD in Religious Studies from the Catholic University of America and has taught at the University of Dayton for over 35 years. He is the coeditor of the volume from the 2011 Ecclesiological Investigations conference, *Ecclesiology and Exclusion* (2012). He is the author of *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (2000) as well as two textbooks, *What Is Christianity?* (2016) and *The Catholic Church in a Changing World* (2019).

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Peter Neuner is a Catholic priest and theologian. As a student of Heinrich Fries, he received his PhD in 1976 in Theology. His Habilitation followed in 1978. He was Professor of Fundamental Theology in Passau. In 1985 he received the call to the Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich and took up the chair for dogmatics at the Catholic Theological Faculty there. The area of ecumenical theology was added in 2000. Until his retirement in 2006, he was also director of the Ecumenical Research Institute at the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Munich.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Vladimir Latinovic and Mark D. Chapman

Change is life and life is change. Our bodies and souls move through time, constantly developing from one state to the next. Even time itself can be defined as change because through the present it transforms the unknown future into the unchangeable past. Our cells mutate and die only so that they are replaced by new ones, just as we through our deaths make way for new generations. Our experience and wisdom also grow or degrade, but they never stand still. Our relationships with our family and friends develop and often take unexpected and sometimes unwanted turns. Change is actually one of the rare constants in our existence; if there is not enough of it, we become tired and bored and we feel the urge to change something so that our lives might become interesting and exciting again. Nothing in this world stands still. Heraclitus grasped this changeability of the world inside us and around us by stating that everything flows (*panta rhei*).

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And yet, Christian churches as well as other religions often see change as something essentially negative. They see themselves as based on teachings which are "set in stone". They call their books "sacred" in order emphasize that nothing in them is allowed to be changed; and even if those religions might have been founded by someone who was himself an innovator and who changed the old teaching in order to create a the new one, which is the case both with Christianity and Islam, they nevertheless emphasize how important it is that people do not change this new teaching.[1] The worst word in their vocabulary is reserved for those who try to change the official teachings of the church or religion but who fail to do so. They are called heretics. For those who succeed in changing things, however, another term is used—orthodox. This usually carries a positive connotation, but even where they accept the changes that were brought about, churches desperately try to show that they did not actually change anything: instead, they claim, they have simply found new ways of expressing the old unchangeable truths.

There are many ways that modern psychology could offer an explanation of this phenomenon of rejecting change. Some would connect it with anxiety, because accepting new things requires a degree of courage. Some would say that this rejection of change is unhealthy because it lacks an openness for the new; and some would utter the truism that we need constancy in our lives just as much as we need change.[2] Unfortunately, due to some or all of the above mentioned factors in religious circles, there are often cases where change is rejected. There are some, especially in leadership positions, who are simply too comfortable with the way things are to have any great desire to bring about change. Such inertia is of course one of the worst kinds of reasons not to change. Those who resist such temptations which come with power are in almost every case acknowledged by future generations, when things that were considered as innovations become normal and standard. Here we might simply mention Francis of Assisi, Luther, and Pope John XXIII who, while very different personalities, were all bold visionaries and reformers who were not afraid of bringing change into the life of the church.

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[1] For Christianity, see Revelation 22:18. This is especially the case with Islam which, based on the Quran's Surah Al-Ahzab (33:40), claims to be the final revelation and final religion given to the human beings.

[2] Life would be extremely difficult if everything changed constantly. We might suggest that we need a proper balance of continuity and change in order to be happy with our life.

One of the people who was dedicated with his whole being to positive change was the dedicatee of this volume: Gerard Mannion. Born into a family of Irish immigrants to the UK and educated in a state comprehensive school in all probability he might well have followed a quite different career, perhaps working a normal job, after which he would relax by watching rugby games with his friends and spending his free time in a pub. But Gerard Mannion wanted something more: he was passionate about changing this world and his own Catholic Church for the better. He did his best to succeed academically to achieve these ambitions. He gained a place at King's College, Cambridge, and then moved to take his doctorate at New College, Oxford, two of the most famous and prestigious academic institutions in the English-speaking world. He read (and later wrote) countless books and articles, he spent his time in the company of brightest theological minds of our time, he socialized with archbishops and cardinals, and yet still he found the time to visit pubs, to talk to normal people, and to watch and play rugby.[3] And he achieved all this because he refused to stand still and he embraced change.

But change also played another role in Gerard Mannion's life. Like many of us he used it therapeutically to learn to live with and even to cure his sense of frustration with the way the things were: Frustration that the church to which he belonged—along with the other churches—is led by those who do not feel the needs of the poor and the oppressed; frustration that theology is not listening to the spirit of the age in a way that would enable the church to survive in our modern world; frustration that the church rejects people based on sexual orientation, gender, heritage, skin color, and religious belonging along with many, many other exasperations. To all of these Gerard saw only one cure: change. He used to say that we cannot keep on doing things the way we have always done them if we want to have a future. This is why he was so excited with the prospects that Pope Francis would start changing the church.[4] By praising him he was actually praising change and he hoped that Francis would be able to introduce more and more change.

This passion for change is the main reason why we decided to dedicate this volume to our friend's honor and memory. In this volume, we have asked our distinguished contributors to ask and hopefully to offer some

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[3] Rugby was the constant in his life, which he said that we all needed.

[4] See, for example, Gerard Mannion, *Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism: Evangelii Gaudium and the Papal Agenda* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

answers to questions such as: What needs to be changed in the universal church and in the particular denominations? How does or did change influence the life of the church? What are the dangers that change brings with it? What awaits us if we refuse to change certain things? All the essays in this book are in some way related to the topic of change. Many of them focus on historical and living people and events that have made a significant contribution to changing the church for the better or sometimes for the worse. Some also present opportunities to imagine the changes that might need to take place in particular Christian denominations, whether over the ordination of women, different approaches to sexuality, reform of the magisterium, and many other issues related to change.

The first section explores theological and historical topics related to change. The authors explore questions such as how the early church responded to situations such as the decline of large numbers of Christians, changing penitential practices, and considering what these examples of past change might teach us today. David G. Hunter discusses this in relation to our struggles to find adequate pastoral answers to the problem of divorce and remarriage. Vladimir Latinovic shows how changes and development in doctrine itself affected the position of some theologians who had hitherto been considered Orthodox but who suddenly, because of that change, found themselves in the opposite, heretical camp. Other chapters explore the theological role of conflicts that accompany changes in the church, asking whether internal church quarrels can be avoided at any cost, or whether perhaps, as Judith Gruber shows, there can be theological significance to disagreement in the church. Massimo Faggioli examines the fundamental steps that certain churches have had to take and the reforms that have been necessary as they have sought to develop a new relationship with history and modernity.

The second part deals with change in the Church in relation to the wider social context particularly with regard to gender and social and economic issues, including drastic climate change, biodiversity loss and scarcity of natural resources. Elaine Padilla discusses, for example, the need for the Church to uphold a mission that contributes to the preservation of our planet. This section also deals with the changes in behavior that are required to address the impact of modern food economies, which are currently completely unsustainable and cruel in terms of production methods. Matthew Eaton discusses the changes that are required to minimize cruelty to animals through methods that already exist in Christian practice, such as fasting. Cristina Lledo Gomez deals with the question of how the church can address those who have survived abuse, including those

who have experienced it outside the church by placing the abused and vulnerable at the forefront of church activity and change. Mary McClintock Fulkerson goes on to explore the ways in which prayer, ritual, and the global community can affect and change the lives of those who do not have the security of their own home. Scott MacDougall looks in depth at the question of the source of change, identifying it in the Holy Spirit in which the human role in such changes is responsive, not causal. Other important topics addressed in this question include Susie Paulik Babka's discussion of how the fraught incorporation of twentieth-century visual art in the Roman Catholic Church analogizes its relationship to Modernity. Drawing on the theme of synodality as the mode of introducing change in the Church, Patricia Madigan O.P. explores the role of women in decision-taking in the Church. Dennis M. Doyle addresses the issue of birth control from a centrist point of view through a comparison of the opposing views of conservative and progressive groups.

The third part, which addresses issues of mission and world Christianity, begins with a fascinating account by Roger Haight S.J. of how mission theology has developed in the past 75 years due to such factors as ecumenism, increased social freedoms, and interreligious dialogue. Mission is also discussed in other chapters from a historical perspective. Paul M. Collins, for example, addresses how mission changed in the early church, which stands in stark contrast to the modern understanding: The ways in which the concept of mission changes directly affect what kind of Church we are building in the present day. Martyn Percy goes on to ask whether the goal of mission should be the social transformation and renewal of society rather than the recruitment of church members. From a different perspective Gioacchino Campese asks how the mission and role of the Church need to respond to the circumstances of the refugee crisis, and how migration generally affects change. In turn, Darren J. Dias addresses the contested question of how the Church might approach its colonial past and what the role of the Church should be in the post-colonial paradigm. Stan Chu Ilo discusses the challenges facing the Church in Africa and how the Church might change to responds to the particular context of this region: Change is identified as the revolutionary power of the Church to change that derives from the biblical tradition. Indeed, if the Church is not able to change, it will not be able to survive. Sometimes, as Debora Tonelli shows, this change goes to the limits of revolution. The reasons for this revolution, as well as for change itself, are sometimes invisible. Sometimes it can even occur naturally, simply because our world is changing drastically: People have changed their way of life, they travel in search of work

and education, and often they leave their countries. How does this affect our understanding of a Church which can still seem too Eurocentric? What contribution, asks Jonathan Y. Tan, can Christians from Asia make to this change in ecclesiology?

The fourth part of the book deals with some of the most drastic changes that have taken place in the last century, which have emerged from increasing ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. Ecumenical dialogue has taught Christians to live together in ways that were previously unthinkable, and this change, according to John Borelli, continues to affect the lives of Christians and calls for new ways of relating. Even the more conservative Christian churches eventually accepted the change. For many years, for example, the Roman Catholic Church refused to participate in any movements that emphasized religious freedom and diversity. Leo D. Lefebure recalls that Irish American bishops cooperated with other Christians and followers of other religions in the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago; these pioneers expressed attitudes and actions of ecumenical and interreligious openness that were suspect at that time but would be endorsed by the Second Vatican Council many years later. Changes in relations among Christians went hand in hand with greater openness to dialogue with other religions. This is especially true for Muslims with whom the dialogue has gone furthest and where there have been signs of truly radical change, as Roberto Catalano describes. Of course, according to Jason Welle O.F.M., there have been examples of different approaches to members of other religions earlier on through the course of Christian history, including the example of St. Francis and his relationship to Ayyūbid Sultan al-Malik al-Kāmil. Interreligious dialogue, however, also led Christians, as Nicolas G. Mumejian shows, to begin to reconsider their concept of mission: How was it possible to reconcile Christian mission with interreligious dialogue? On what would such a mission be based? This part also addresses the Church's complex relationship to Judaism. Although the Church has changed significantly in this area from late antiquity and the Middle Ages, it has still a long way to go, particularly in addressing the issue that much anti-Judaism derives from the New Testament. Mary Doak discusses the changes that are needed for the church to be free from this intolerance.

The fifth part of the book deals with questions in ecclesiology. Paul Avis discusses the relationship between the Church and the kingdom of God and how common repentance, ongoing reform, and openness to development might be identified as ways in which the church can contribute to the

reaffirmation of society. At the same time, it is also clear that Church institutions can often complicate the process of change. Craig A. Phillips discusses how St. Francis of Assisi challenged the institutional church and thus pushed its boundaries, while at the same time changing the Church through personal example. In turn, those who exercise authority in the Church frequently oppose change. As Miriam Haar shows, this raises significant questions if certain parts of the Church change drastically and, for example, begin to allow same-sex marriages and the ordination of homosexuals as bishops, while others do not. The issue of the identity and maintenance of communion is one of the issues that the Anglican Communion has been addressing for several decades. Andrew Pierce consequently asks: What are the 'instruments of communion' that hold the Anglican Communion together? In relation to the *magisterium* of the Roman Catholic Church, Peter C. Phan discusses how the Church must learn to fulfill its role in a multicultural and multireligious world. Who participates in the *magisterium* of the church? Is it only bishops and popes or should it be all Christians, lay people, the poor, and even members of other religions?

In the Roman Catholic Church the question of who makes decisions in the church is, of course, directly related to the question of papal primacy and infallibility. Peter Neuner writes about how that teaching came about and how it was at least partially replaced through the "aggiornamento" of the Second Vatican Council. The questions of how church structures can be reformed in general and especially how healthy decentralization might be possible are addressed by Sandra Mazzolini, who argues that this is necessary for a healthy church mission since the local church is always deeply inculturated. Finally, Dale T. Irvin addresses the issue of communion in extreme situations, which can be broadly understood as the situation in which we find ourselves today.

The sixth and final part of the book discusses the issues of synodality and participation through the question of how the Church can cope with the loss of credibility while at the same time helping people rebuild trust in the Church. Sandra Arenas shows how only a change that leads to the strengthening of local structures can lead to real mechanisms of participation for all in the Church. Communion ecclesiology, which in this sense is practiced by the Pope Francis, is certainly a good start for synodality. But in order for it to be fully realized, change is needed, according to Peter De Mey, at the local, regional, and universal level. Some progress has already been made in this regard in some churches. In this sense, the document "Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church," published in 2018 by

the International Theological Commission of the Roman Catholic Church, which is discussed by Brian P. Flanagan, offers a solid foundation for further development. At the same time, the Orthodox Church, which is proud of its long history of synodality, can significantly contribute to that process: The parish, that is, the local assembly, as Radu Bordeianu shows, experiences synodality in its liturgy, shared governance, and ministries. According to Paul Lakeland, we should therefore look for the source of change in the church at the "existential peripheries" and not in the center, as was stated in the address of Pope Francis to the College of Cardinals before his election. All these questions can of course be asked as part of planning what synods should look like in the future. What will the next Ecumenical Council look like? Finally, Luc Forestier asks: What do councils look like seventeen centuries after the first Ecumenical Council was convened?

As can be seen from this brief description of the topics, the book contains a very wide range of topics, which address the issue of change in the past and future. We have deliberately chosen not to use the more conventional term *"reform"* to describe the processes that have taken place and still need to take place in our churches. This has to do with the fact that reform is often used to discuss attempts to keep some of the old while fixing only what needs to be fixed. It is our firm belief that this is sometimes simply not enough. A road can be patched only a certain number of times after which it becomes unusable; it then needs to be completely resurfaced or even replaced by a new road. This is undoubtedly the case with some of the urgent things that need to be changed in the church, most importantly the handling of clerical abuse, as well as many other ways in which we exploit our fellow creatures and the wider environment, along with many other urgent matters. The approach to such issues truly needs to change if there is to be any future in this world. Of course, many smaller things can be reformed but only up to a certain point and only to ensure that we do not completely lose our way. How this can be done can be seen in many of the contributions in the pages that follow.

This book is one of those books of which we are proud, but we wish we did not have to collect it together at this time. As editors and close friends of Gerard Mannion, we both wish we had had some other reason for bringing together these excellent scholars to write about such a relevant topic. But it was Gerard's sudden death on September 21, 2019, at the very young age of just 49 that was the occasion for this volume dedicated to his memory and his passion for change. It was a change for which none

of us was prepared and only the God of all mercies knows why he was taken so prematurely at the height of his academic powers and his life. In his relatively short existence Gerard wrote and edited almost two dozen books. Although they were all of very high quality none of them can be described as his *magnum opus*.[5] We would like to believe that this volume which we have edited represents his *magnum opus* because his greatest achievement was drawing together a remarkable group of scholars and people into a network that pushes the boundaries of ecclesiology and ecumenism.[6]

Although at the beginning we stated that everything changes, there is something that will never change, and that is our respect and love for him, and our memories of all the times we shared with him. Αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη—eternal memory! *Requiem aeternam dona ei, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat ei. Requiescat in pace.*

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[5] He was actually working on what he thought would be his *magnum opus* when he died. This was a multi volume project "The Art of Magisterium: A Teaching Church That Learns" which was have been published with Liturgical Press.

[6] We are referring to the Ecclesiological Investigation International Research network. See more at: http://ei-research.net/

History and Theology

From Rigor to Reconciliation: Cyprian of Carthage on Changing Penitential Practice

David G. Hunter

Cyprian of Carthage, the third-century North African bishop and martyr, was a privileged witness to one of the most dramatic changes in the history of Christianity: the emergence of a penitential system for the forgiveness of previously "unforgiveable" sins. In response to the widespread failure of Christians to remain faithful during the persecution of the Emperor Decius, Cyprian and his fellow North African bishops gradually came to acknowledge that reconciliation might be granted even to those who committed the ultimate sin of apostasy. In this essay, I will examine Cyprian's evolution on the question of penance. The various reasons he offered for allowing changes in penitential practice may provide resources for the contemporary church, especially in its struggle to find adequate pastoral responses to the problem of divorce and remarriage.[1]

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[1] For an excellent overview and analysis of Cyprian's controversies, see J. Patout Burns, Cyprian the Bishop (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). The introductions and commentaries of G.W. Clarke to his multi-volume translation of Cyprian's letters in the Ancient Christian Writers series are an unparalleled resource for the study of Cyprian. See note 2 below.

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Cyprian became bishop of Carthage as a relatively recent convert, barely two years after his baptism.[2] Within a year he had to confront a crisis that was to define his entire episcopate. Late in 249 or early 250, the Roman Emperor Decius issued an edict requiring that sacrifice to the traditional gods be offered throughout the empire.[3] Motivated by a desire to guarantee the continued divine protection of the empire, Decius included the novel requirement that all who sacrificed should get a certificate (*libellus*) signed by local authorities who had witnessed the sacrificial ritual. Penalties for failure to comply varied according to rank and social status: *honestiores* were subject to exile and confiscation of property; *humiliores* were liable to imprisonment and torture. Unlike previous emperors, Decius seemed more concerned to create apostates (and thereby to stimulate traditional worship) than to execute dissidents; as a result, there were few judicial executions, but significant numbers of Christians who suffered penalties of different kinds. The faithful who suffered but survived became known as "confessors"; those who perished were "martyrs." Much larger numbers, however, lapsed in some way, either by actually sacrificing or by obtaining fraudulent certificates.

The persecution of Decius did not last long; by June of 251, the emperor had been killed in battle against the Goths. But an unprecedented crisis remained for church leaders: how to handle the large numbers of Christians—in some places the majority—who had failed to stand firm. In North Africa, the situation was complicated by several factors. Unlike Fabian, the bishop of Rome who suffered immediate martyrdom, Bishop Cyprian believed that he was called to flee and continue to administer the church of Carthage in exile; this decision led some to question the Cyprian's own authority. But a more pressing problem was that some presbyters in Carthage had begun to admit lapsed Christians to eucharistic communion on the strength of letters of recommendation (*libelli pacis*) from the confessors. Earlier Christian tradition had tended to treat apostasy as an "unforgiveable" sin, for which ecclesiastical penance was not available. The new, post-Decian situation, therefore, had raised a twofold

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[2] The date is unknown, but Cyprian was bishop by Easter of 249. See Graham W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage* (ACW 43; New York: Newman Press, 1984), vol. 1, 16. Cyprian's elevation provoked opposition from some of the more established presbyters, who continued to question his authority and to resist his policies on the lapsed Christians.

[3] According to Clarke (*Letters*, vol. 1, 27–28), the edict applied not only to citizens, but to entire households, including freedmen and slaves.

question: could a baptized Christian be reconciled after denying the faith, and who had the authority to administer that reconciliation?[4]

Cyprian's Evolving Position on the Reconciliation of the Lapsed

There is good reason to think that Cyprian may initially have held the rigorist view that denied the possibility of penance for apostasy. One of his earliest works, the three-book collection of biblical excerpts known as the *Testimonia ad Quirinum*, contained the following topic: "It is not possible for the person who has sinned against God to be forgiven in the church."[5] The topic was accompanied by the following biblical quotations, all of which suggested that there were certain sins (or a certain sin) that could not be forgiven: Matthew 12:32 ("And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come"), Mark 3:28–29 ("Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"), and 1 Samuel 2:25 ("If a man sins against a man, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?").

The *Testimonia* were composed early in Cyprian's episcopate, prior to the persecution of Decius. By the year 250, much had changed, and large numbers of lapsed Christians, encouraged by dissident presbyters, were demanding readmittance to full communion on the basis of the *libelli pacis* issued by the confessors. In a trio of letters from May of 250, Cyprian argued that there should be no reconciliation given to apostates until peace had come to the Church as a whole. At that time, he planned to return to the city and hold a council of bishops to deliberate on the proper course of action in regard to the lapsed. While Cyprian acknowledged that confessors and martyrs had a role in reviewing cases of the lapsed, he insisted that their recommendations much be conveyed to the bishop and

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[4] The foundational study of post-baptismal penance is Bernhard Poschmann, *Paenitentia secunda: Die kirchliche Busse im ältesten Christentum bis Cyprian und Origenes* (Bonn: P. Hanstein, 1940); see also the historical essays in Karl Rahner, *Penance in the Early Church*. Vol. 15 in his *Theological Investigations*, trans. Lionel Swain (New York: Crossroads, 1982).

[5] *Test*. 3.28 (CSEL 3.1, 142): "Non posse in ecclesia remitti ei qui in deum delinquerit."

would be considered only after the persecution had ceased.[6] While Cyprian had especially harsh words for those presbyters who presumed to grant reconciliation prematurely, at this point he indicated that some form of penance and reconciliation might be possible, when properly administered by the bishops.[7]

Within a few months another evolution is evident in Cyprian's attitude toward the lapsed. Perhaps under the influence of a policy set by presbyters in the church at Rome, Cyprian acknowledged that immediate reconciliation might be granted to a lapsed Christian in the case of illness or nearness of death. Writing to the Roman clergy in summer of 250, Cyprian signaled the influence of a previous letter from Rome:

> You counselled that comfort should be given to those who fell ill after their lapse and, being penitent, were anxious to be admitted to communion. I have, therefore, decided that I too should take my stand alongside your opinion, thereby avoiding that our actions, which ought to be united and in harmony on every issue, might differ in any respect.[8]

Again, however, Cyprian emphasized the importance of refraining from any general judgement on the lapsed until peace had been restored and church leaders had been able to consult on the appropriate policies.[9]

In the following year, the long-awaited council took place. Cyprian returned to Carthage in the spring of that year and sometime after Easter of 251 called a council to consider the situation of the lapsed.[10] In Letter 55, written to Bishop Antonianus, who was being influenced by the Roman rigorist Novatian, Cyprian outlined and defended the decisions of the council.[11] The basic provisions were fairly straightforward: First, if someone who had sacrificed and received deathbed reconciliation should

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[6] *Ep.* 15.2.2 (addressed to the confessors); *ep.* 17.1.2 (addressed to the laity).

[7] *Ep.* 16 was addressed to the wayward clergy and cited some of the same biblical passages that appeared in *Test.* 3.28. In *ep.* 16.4.2 Cyprian threatened to suspend the liturgical privileges of presbyters who continued to administer penance.

[8] *Ep.* 20.3.2 (CSEL 3/2: 528–529); trans. Clarke, *Letters*, vol., 1, 102–103.

[9] *Ep.* 20.3.3.

[10] Even prior to the death of Decius in June of 251, the persecution had started to abate. Cyprian delivered his famous treatise, *De lapsis*, upon returning to the city, but before the council of 251 took place.

[11] In this brief essay, I am not able to do justice to all of the complexities of the controversy. Suffice it to say that Cyprian faced criticism both from those who opposed any reconciliation for the lapsed ("rigorists," such as Novatian) and those who favored immediate reconciliation for all ("laxists," such as the rival Carthaginian presbyters).

recover, that person was considered a Christian in good standing. Second, a sharp distinction was made between those who had actually sacrificed and those who had obtained a fraudulent certificate without sacrificing; the latter were restored immediately, upon examination.[12] Third, those who sacrificed were to be examined individually to determine the degree of their guilt; those who agreed to undergo penance were to be reconciled only on their deathbed, while those who refused to undergo penance were to be denied reconciliation even on their deathbed.[13]

While the provisions of the council of 251 might not sound revolutionary, Cyprian's letter 55 provided a different perspective. In his argument to Antonianus, Cyprian showed clear awareness that his position and that of the majority of the Roman and North African bishops was a development over prior practice.[14] Cyprian insisted that he had reached his conclusions "not without careful deliberation and lengthy consideration."[15] Likewise, the council's decision had been reached only after carefully examining the scriptural arguments on both sides.[16] Contrary to his previous resistance to granting reconciliation to those who had sacrificed, Cyprian observed that at the council he had "yielded to the urgent needs of the time" (*necessitate temporum*) and considered "provisions that would bring salvation to the many."[17] Especially noteworthy is Cyprian's concern to differentiate among the lapsed: he recognized that those who had sacrificed were not all equally guilty, and insisted that each of the lapsed must be examined individually.[18]

Most significant of all, Cyprian insisted on the priority of mercy in dealing with the lapsed. He argued that bishops "have no right to be over-rigid or harsh or callous in caring for our brothers. Rather we ought to

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[12] The distinction was an innovation for Cyprian. As recently as *De lapsis* 27 he had argued that simply obtaining a certificate was an act of apostasy.

[13] For a closer look at the ritual dimensions of penance, see Joseph A. Favazza, "Chaos Contained: The Construction of Religion in Cyprian of Carthage," *Questions Liturgiques* 80 (1999): 81–90.

[14] In *ep.* 55.6.2, Cyprian noted that Bishop Cornelius in Rome had also called a council of bishops that reached the same conclusions as the council in Carthage.

[15] *Ep.* 55.3.2 (CSEL 3.2, 625): "[…] non sine librata diu et ponderata ratione a me"; trans. Clarke, *Letters*, vol. 3, 34, slightly altered.

[16] *Ep.* 55.6.1.

[17] *Ep.* 55.7.2 (CSEL 3.2, 628); trans. Clarke, *Letters*, vol. 3, 36.

[18] See *ep.* 55.13.2 and 55.17.3. In *ep.* 55.16.1, Cyprian even accused the rigorists of holding a Stoic view of the parity of sins: "We ought, therefore, to shun any notions which do not issue from the clemency of God but which are rather begotten of the arrogance and rigidity of philosophy"; trans. Clarke, *Letters*, 3, 42.

mourn with those who mourn and weep with those who weep."[19] Like the good Samaritan, bishops should "imitate Christ's teaching and example, snatch our wounded brother from the jaws of our foe, tend him, and keep him safe for God's judgment."[20] Against the rigorists who might argue that extending reconciliation to apostates would create a "slippery slope" and lead to a decline in martyrdom, Cyprian rejected such an equation. Citing another innovation—the granting of penance to adulterers—he argued that this practice had not led to any decline in Christian enthusiasm for virginity, chastity, or continence: "the power of purity," he insisted, "is not crushed because penitence and pardon are conceded to the adulterer."[21] In short, Cyprian argued, the church's bishops "have no right to deny the fruits of repentance to those who grieve."[22]

Before concluding, there is one more innovation to which Cyprian and the North African episcopacy give witness. Two years after the council of 251, the bishops met again. This time, anticipating (mistakenly) the outbreak of a new persecution, the bishops decided that all of those who had sacrificed during the time of Decius and who had steadfastly engaged in penance, should be immediately restored to full communion. The rationale for this dramatic change in policy, as presented by Cyprian in a letter to Cornelius in Rome, was that the anticipated crisis required that penitents be adequately fortified for the impending combat by the grace of the Eucharist:

> But under the present circumstances reconciliation becomes a necessity not for the sick but for the strong, communion we must grant not to the dying but to the living. Those whom we stir and rouse to battle we must not leave all naked and unarmed; we must fortify and protect them with the body and blood of Christ. Since the Eucharist has been appointed for this purpose, to be a safeguard to those who receive it, those whom we would have against the Enemy we must now arm with the protection of the Lord's banquet.[23]

While Cyprian acknowledged that not all of those who would be reconciled were fully worthy, he argued that the bishops owed to the faithful all the potential benefits of the sacrament. And if any bishop saw fit not to grant reconciliation to the penitent lapsed, Cyprian warned, "he will have

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[19] *Ep.* 55.19.1; trans. Clarke, *Letters*, vol. 3, 44, slightly altered.
[20] *Ep.* 55.19.2; trans. Clarke, *Letters*, vol. 3, 45.
[21] *Ep.* 55.20.2; trans. Clarke, *Letters*, vol. 3, 45
[22] *Ep.* 55.29.1; trans. Clarke, *Letters*, vol. 3, 52.
[23] *Ep.* 57.2.2; trans. Clarke, *Letters*, vol. 3, 56.

to render on the day of judgment an account to the Lord for his unseasonable severity and his inhuman harshness. But so far as we are concerned, we have acted as faith and charity and brotherly love demanded."[24]

Conclusion

Numerous lessons can be drawn from the evolution of Cyprian's position on the reconciliation of lapsed Christians. Perhaps the most fundamental was his willingness to embrace change, especially in the light of changed circumstances. As the heir of a rigorist North African tradition on the sin of apostasy, Cyprian and the North African episcopacy as a whole gradually came to embrace the possibility of ecclesiastical forgiveness for what was previously considered an "unforgiveable" sin. He recognized that to deny the possibility of penance, even for the most serious sins, was effectively to drive believers out of the Church, back into pagan practice, or into the arms of heretics, and schismatics.[25] Rejecting the arguments of those who preferred an elitist conception of a "pure" Church, unsullied by contact with sinners, Cyprian emphasized the Church as a "field hospital," whose sacraments provided healing and sustenance for those who had failed to live up to the ideals of the Gospel.

While there are significant differences between the crises of the third century and those of the present day, it is worth considering what these examples of past change in Church practice might teach us. There appear to be obvious parallels with current debates within the Roman Catholic Church over the status of divorced and remarried Catholics. The evolution of Cyprian and the North African bishops on the question of penance indicates an openness to consider the possibility of change, even in a long-standing practice such as the denial of penance to apostates. Similarly, the Catholic Church today faces the question of whether or not to relax or modify traditional strictures on remarriage after divorce. As Cardinal Walter Kasper noted in the lecture he delivered to the consistory of cardinals prior to the 2014 Synod on the Family, the early church offered "a pastoral practice of tolerance, clemency, and forbearance" that might be

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[24] *Ep.* 57.5.2; trans. Clarke, *Letters*, vol. 3, 59. Cf. Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*, 41, who stresses the importance of the councils of 251 and 253 in re-establishing church unity: "The cohesion of the church, threatened by the desertion of the apostates and the authority of the martyrs, had been effectively restored and maintained."

[25] Cyprian developed this argument explicitly in *ep.* 55.6.1.

applied to the divorced and remarried today.[26] As the example of Cyprian and the North African bishops suggests, such a model would acknowledge the priority of mercy over severity; it would recognize the diversity of persons and the complexity of human motivations and relationships; and it would offer communion in the Eucharist as the source of strength and healing rather than division and exclusion.

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[26] Walter Kasper, *The Gospel of the Family*, Translated by William Madges (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2014), 31. Cardinal Kasper cited canon 8 of the Council of Nicaea, which was directed against the so-called "Pure Ones" (*katharoi*) who refused communion with those who had entered into second marriages or lapsed in time of persecution, but who had undergone ritual penance.

Who Do You Call a Heretic? Fluid Notions of Orthodoxy and Heresy in Late Antiquity

Vladimir Latinovic

The Orthodox church, to which I belong, in the course of its long existence produced some of the most beautiful and innovative concepts of Christian theology,[1] and yet she somehow manages to uphold the notion that she is a champion of unchangedness and that everything that she does needs to be in total agreement with the tradition and the theology of the "holy fathers". This obsession with continuity and tradition goes so far that in the era in which almost all other churches stepped on the path of modernization,[2] the Orthodox actually thought that they needed to take a step back and remove all the layers of modernity acquired during

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[1] This is especially the case for the era of Late Antiquity, in which the East was dominant in theology and which is often considered the golden age of Christian theology.

[2] This in most cases did not help them increase the number of their faithful. The best example is the Anglican Communion, which is always in tune with the spirit of the age, but which has suffered a significant decrease in the number of its faithful in the past few decades. There is a famous quote from the diary of William Ralph Inge, also known as "The Gloomy Dean," connected to his lecture at Sion College in 1911 titled "Co-operation of the Church with the Spirit of the Age". He writes: "[…] if you marry the Spirit of your own generation you will be a widow in the next". See: William Ralph Inge, *Diary of a Dean: St. Paul's 1911–1934* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), 12.

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centuries, especially the accretions that occurred under the influence of Western scholasticism,[3] by returning to the "theology of the fathers", whatever that is supposed to mean.[4]

In this chapter, I seek to show that in many cases of the development of Christian (and in particular Orthodox) theology there is no such thing as continuity with the tradition and that church often used this continuity as a façade which served only to hide the fact that things had significantly changed.[5] The best way to do this is to show how because of the change of the official doctrine certain persons were condemned for heresy even though they did not change anything in their positions. The only thing that changed was official church theology. Since most condemnations of this type occurred post-mortem even if they had wanted to change something they could not have done so.

As someone who comes from a church that has a rather black and white notion of heresy and orthodoxy, I have always been fascinated with the selection process of who is declared a heretic and who is considered to be orthodox or even a saint, which are often equated. Putting aside all of those considered by the modern Orthodox as heretics, in accordance with Warburton's principle "Orthodoxy is my doxy – heterodoxy is another man's doxy",[6] I would like to focus on some late antique theologians who had the misfortune to be declared heretics, even though they were not, and those who had the luck of remaining orthodox, even though there were valid reasons to consider them heretical, if we were to follow equal and just principles. Finally, as mentioned above, I will consider those who

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[3] Florovsky (borrowing from Luther) referred to this influence as to the "Babylonian" or the "Latin Captivity" of Russian theology. See: Georges Florovsky, *Ways of Russian Theology* (Belmont, MA: Nordland Pub. Co., 1979), 121, 181.

[4] I am referring to the so-called neo-patristic movement of the twentieth century led by Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, Nicholas Afanasiev, Alexander Schmemann, John Meyendorff, and ultimately John Zizioulas. For the emergence and motives of this theology see: Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance* (Oxford: University Press, 2014). Of course, this is not an isolated phenomenon: there were similar movements in Western theology, such as "Nouvelle Théologie."

[5] The best example for this is the Council of Chalcedon (451), which introduced a political (middle way) solution for the long-standing Alexandrian (miaphysite) and Antiochian (dyophysite) Christological disputes. While introducing this artificial theology the fathers of the council felt need to state in the Creed of the council that they were only "following the holy Fathers" (ἑπόμενοι τοίνυν τοῖς ἀγίοις πατράσιν), which of course was only partly true.

[6] Joseph Priestley et al., *Memoirs of Dr. Joseph Priestley: To the Year 1795, Volume 1* (London: J. Johnson, 1806), 372.

had the opportunity to play both roles at once: to be considered orthodox in one phase of their lives or even until death, and heretics at some later phase of their life or post mortem when there is obviously no right of reply.

Let us begin in chronological order, with Tertullian (c. 155–c. 240). There is probably no need to mention all the achievements of this prolific early Christian author from Carthage, who was not only the first important theologian writing in Latin,[7] "responsible for much of the theological vocabulary of Western Christianity"[8] but also a vicious polemicist against heresy.[9] Today his reputation is at best mixed. Shortly after his death, the first negative reviews of his theology started to emerge. The first to criticize Tertullian openly was probably Lactancius, who addressed not so much his theology as his education and style.[10] Jerome went a step further and accused him of lapsing into Montanism,[11] and finally Augustine cemented his condemnation by openly calling him a heretic (although an eloquent one) for his problematic teachings on the immortality of body and soul and for his "contrary to Apostolic teaching, [condemnation of] second marriage as debauchery".[12] There is also an official refutation of his writings in the *Decretum Gelasianum* issued by Pope Gelasius I (492–496 AD) in 494, although the authorship of this decree is disputed.[13] This means that the first theologian ever to use the word "Trinity", the theologian who was the father of the formula "*tres personae, una substantia*",[14] which, *mutatis mutandis* pertains until today, and probably one of the first persons who introduced homoousian theological concepts, is apparently a heretic.

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[7] Tertullian was the first western author to produce an entire corpus of theological writings in the Latin language.

[8] Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), 10.

[9] Besides his polemics against individual heretics such as *Adversus Marcionem*, *Adversus Praxean* and *Adversus Hermogenem*, Tertullian was one of the first Christian authors to write a kind of a manual on how to deal with heretics and heresies, the so-called "De praescriptione haereticorum". For a long time, the compendium *Adversus omnes haereses* was attributed to him, but modern scholarship no longer considers this one of his writings. On Tertullian's notion of heresy, see P. I. Kaufman, "Tertullian on Heresy, History, and the Reappropriation of Revelation." *Church History* 60, no. 2 (1991): 167–79.

[10] See: Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* 5,1 and 5,4.

[11] See: Eusebius Hieronymus Stridonensis. *De viris illustribus* 53.

[12] Augustinus Hipponensis, *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeus* 86.

[13] H. Leclerq, "Gelasien (Decret)", in: *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie,* Vol. 6 (1924), 722–747.

[14] See: Tertullianus, *Adversus Praxean* 2–3.

At approximately the same time in the East we have another giant, Origen (c. 184–c. 253), who is today "widely considered one of the most important theologians in the history of Christianity"[15] and has been called "undoubtedly the greatest genius the early church ever produced".[16] Origen held an even higher reputation than Tertullian. If we are to believe Eusebius and his *Church History*,[17] he was appointed Clement's successor as head of the famous Alexandrian catechetical school,[18] which was an honor only the absolutely best theologians of that time could achieve. An entire book would not suffice to describe his influence on later generations of theologians, including Didimus the Blind, Pamphilus and Eusebius of Caesarea, the Cappadocian fathers, Rufinus, Jerome, Ambrose, Maximus the Confessor and others. Origen's orthodoxy was also undisputed during his lifetime[19] and, like Tertullian, he fought viciously against heresy. Besides his writings against individual heretics and philosophers such as *Contra Celsum*, we know through the report of Eusebius that he actually participated in the trials of heretics as an expert witness, a sort of *peritus*.[20] In addition to that, Origen's final "achievement"—his death—could have placed him on an equal pedestal with early Christian martyrs, or at least confessors. Incarcerated on the order of Emperor Decius, "he endured for the word of Christ, bonds and bodily tortures and torments under the iron collar and in the dungeon",[21] and not long after his release he died. Alas, this martyrdom was never acknowledged. In fact, it was quite the opposite; fifty years after his death, the first attacks on him and his

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[15] Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 99.

[16] John A. McGuckin, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 25.

[17] See: Eusebius Pamphilus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6, 3, 1 and 6, 7–8, 1.

[18] The very existence of the Alexandrian and Antiochian catechetical schools is disputed. For a good overview of this question see: Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 72–78.

[19] This is true with the exception of a few episodes which had mainly to do with jealousy and which were not connected with his teachings but more with practical matters. There are some authors though, who think that Origen also had problems for his teachings. See e.g.: C. C. Richardson, "The Condemnation of Origen," *Church History* 6, no. 1 (1937): 50–59.

[20] See: Eusebius Pamphilus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 6, 33; 6, 37. Dialogue with Heraclides is actually an account of such an investigation.

[21] See: ibid. 6, 39.

theology began.[22] But, his reputation was so esteemed that it took three separate series of attacks (often called the "Origenist crises"), concluding with the fifth ecumenical council, the Second Council of Constantinople, finally to condemn him.[23] As a result of these actions, probably the brightest theological mind of all time, the first theologian to speak of three hypostases in the Trinity and actually to use the term *homoousios* to describe the relation between the Father and the Son,[24] was made a heretic.

Let us now turn to the fourth century and look at one perhaps less well-known theologian, Diodorus of Tarsus (died c. 392–394). Diodorus was one of the strongest supporters of the Nicene theology,[25] and his reputation during his lifetime was spotless. Chrysostom called him the second John the Baptist,[26] and Theodoret described him as "ποταμός διειδής τε καὶ μέγας" [a clear and mighty river] against heresy.[27] Rarely has anyone enjoyed such reverence in his own time and been held up as a pillar of Orthodoxy and true faith as Diodorus. And yet the depreciation of his authority, which began with the activities of Cyril of Alexandria,[28] ended with his official condemnation by two synods (both held in Constantinople, one in 499 and the other in 553). The reason for his condemnation remains unclear,[29] but it appears to have something to do with his assertion of two hypostases in Christ, which was never far from Antiochian Christological tradition, but which through the condemnation of Nestorianism and the strengthening of Alexandrian (more miaphysite) tradition was no longer acceptable as orthodox teaching.[30] Therefore, the

[22] See: C. C. Richardson, ibid. 59–64.

[23] It is still not clear whether and to what extent this council has condemned Origen and his writings. See: Richard Price, transl., *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553* (Translated Texts for Historians, vol. 51). (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012) 17–23; E. M. Harding, "Origenist Crises", in McGuckin, ibid. 166.

[24] Admittedly in a subordinationist and not in a Nicean way.

[25] See Theodor Mommsen, *Theodosiani libri XVI* cum *Constitutionibus Sirmondianis et Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes* (Berolini: Weidmann, 1954), 834.

[26] Iohannes Chrysostomos, *Laus Diodori Episcopi* 52, 3–4.

[27] Theodoretus Cyrrhensis, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4, 25, 3.

[28] He wrote numerous letters in which he tried to establish his heresy and he also wrote *Three Books against Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodorus of Tarsus*, which are today only available in fragments.

[29] Diodor's condemnation does not appear anywhere in the acts of the council of 553. We know that there was one only from the report of Photius.

[30] I explain this process more thoroughly in my book: *Christologie und Kommunion: Entstehung und Verbreitung der homoousianischen Christologie* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2018), 73–117.

only fault of Diodorus was his inability to foresee how theology would develop one century after his death [note the irony].

Similar things can be said of Diodorus's opponent Apollinaris of Laodicea, who in addition had the bad luck of being condemned as a heretic by a series of councils already during his lifetime. This condemnation was sealed by the Second Ecumenical Council held in Constantinople (381). But before these condemnations, Apollinaris was considered to be a perfectly good and orthodox theologian. Indeed, some of the most respected theologians of his time, such as Basil of Caesarea, asked for his advice,[31] only later to be directly involved in his condemnation.[32] As for his theological positions, they can best be described as "radical homoousianism", meaning that he developed Athanasius's Christological positions to the extreme. Actually, his teachings were in most parts indistinguishable to those of Athanasius, indeed so indistinguishable that one of his writings was for a long time held to be Athanasius's *Fourth Oration against the Arians.* Same goes for the formula "μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη"[33] [one nature of the Word of God incarnate], which was for long time attributed to Athanasius, and as such also entered the theology of Cyril of Alexandria. Thus, we have two theologians, both of which used the same ("heretical") phrase, but in one case Apollinaris is considered a heretic while in another case Cyril is not, simply because it was thought that the phrase came from Athanasius? *Quod licet Iovi, non licet bovi.*

Let me finish this brief analysis with one of my favored theologians Pelagius. As opposed to those analyzed above, Pelagius never enjoyed the authority of undisputed Orthodoxy nor was he considered to be a pillar of faith.[34] Nevertheless, he deserves to be mentioned here because of his high moral standards and his ascetic life for which he without doubt deserves to be considered a saint.[35] Doctrinally, Pelagius should also not be deemed a heretic. His notions about human freedom and God's grace were actually

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[31] Basilius Caesariensis, *Epistula 361: Apollinario.*

[32] See: Ekkehard Mühlenberg, *Apollinaris von Laodicea* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 48.

[33] Apollinaris Laodicenus, *Epistula ad Jovianum* 1.

[34] Unless perhaps in some aristocratic circles and small group of his supporters including also some bishops (later called Pelagians).

[35] See: Bryn R. Rees, *Pelagius: A Reluctant Heretic* (Woodbridge and Rochester: Boydell, 1988).

traditional (original) teachings on these subjects in Rome of that time[36] which suddenly became obsolete because Augustine developed a new theology of grace.[37] Pelagius ultimately became a victim of a powerful theologian, who on his side had not only support of the ecclesiastical circles but, through his fight against the Manicheans, also the resources of the entire state machine. This is one wrongdoing that we today can still repair, especially since our modern concepts of freedom and grace are much closer to Pelagius than to Augustine.

It would be possible to continue in this vein for many pages (John 21:25) and show that Arius with his subordinationism was actually more in tune with the tradition than Alexander and Athanasius with their new teachings.[38] I could argue that the pillars of Nicene Orthodoxy in the West—Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrosius of Milan, both highly regarded and respected as saints and church fathers in today's Orthodox Church—should be considered heretics by the Orthodox Church because they thought up the first (although very primitive) version of *filioque*.[39] Finally, I could give some examples that are closer to our own time—such as that of Luther—who back in in his own time was considered to be the devil incarnate by the Catholic Church and who is today almost fully rehabilitated, so much so that his teachings are now considered as largely compatible with the official teachings of the Catholic Church.[40] But the examples I have already given prove the point.

Instead of that, by way of conclusion, let us briefly consider what all these examples show us. First, they reveal that orthodoxy and heresy were and are fluid concepts. Those who were once heretics might one day be rehabilitated (and many of them already are), perhaps not so much by the church, but at least by theologians. Second, modern scholarship casts a

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[36] This is why Pelagius had a strong support base within the western Church and why Rome for a long time refused to condemn him. For the good explanation of his teachings see: Gisbert Greshake, *Gnade als konkrete Freiheit. Eine Untersuchung zur Gnadenlehre des Pelagius* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag 1972).

[37] For an excellent study that shows that Pelagius did not propose any new teaching see: Ali Bonner, *The Myth of Pelagianism* (Oxford: University Press, 2018).

[38] I have discussed this in: V. Latinovic, "Arius Conservativus? The Question of Arius' Theological Belonging," Studia Patristica 95 (2017): 27–42.

[39] See: Anthony Edward Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (Oxford: University Press, 2010) 51–72.

[40] I am referring here to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) which was agreed to by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation in 1999. This declaration is very much in sync with Luther's theology of justification.

shadow of doubt on those who are univocally held as saints and tries to see them in a more neutral way.[41] These realizations bring more balance into the picture. Reconsidering their positions on heresy, orthodoxy and sanctity—and perhaps even separating the last from the first two—could also bring a new era of openness and tolerance to the Orthodox Church,[42] as well as to some other churches.

[41] Something that Orthodox patristics still needs to learn. For example, see: Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought* (London-New York, Routledge, 1998), which is an excellent book written by an extremely knowledgeable and talented scholar, but lacks a single critical word about Athanasius!

[42] In so doing, however, we need to be careful not to damage our ethos and to be at risk of losing some other valuable concepts.

Towards a Theology of Dissent

Judith Gruber

In this contribution, I look more closely into conflicts that accompany change in the church. Are inner-ecclesial controversies to be avoided at all costs, or could there perhaps be a theological significance to disagreement in the church?[1] The Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region that took place in October 2019 was perceived by many as a gathering towards change of current church practices, and was, as such, a controversial event. It offers a rich case study to explore the role of conflict in ecclesial theologies and practices.

A Point of Departure: "Everything is connected" (Laudato Si)

The Amazon Synod discussed its two major topics in ways that showed their intimate connection. There was, first, a strong focus on the environmental crisis that finds its roots predominantly in the 'North/West', but

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[1] This is one of the central questions that motivated one of Gerard Mannion's major research projects. The working title of his final book was *The Art of Magisterium: A Teaching Church That Learns.*

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whose devastating effects are chiefly felt at the peripheries, particularly in the Amazon region. Here, it becomes visible that the looming climate catastrophe is inseparable from questions of social justice. Reckless exploitation poses an acute threat to the survival of Amazonia's indigenous peoples. Here, therefore, the church is massively challenged in its task to realize the gospel message of *buen vivir* for all. Current ecclesial practices, the synod participants agreed, are insufficient; the church has to find new ways to serve the people of Amazonia, and it is also in need of ecological conversion. The synod's two major topics—the ecological-social and the pastoral—thus interlock: "Everything is connected". Evangelization and church reform are not mutually exclusive; rather, only a change of ecclesial practices and structures makes evangelization possible.

If everything is connected, we are confronted with great complexity and cannot hope for simple solutions. Complex problems allow for multiple approaches and generate divergent interpretations. In short, they are prone to trigger disagreement. The 2019 synod also gave rise to dispute that, once again, intensified the conflicts surrounding Francis' pontificate. In response to these divergences, conservative circles have ventilated accusations of heresy and seen the spectre of schism looming over the church. With this interpretation of inner-ecclesial conflict, they argue within an ecclesiological framework that presupposes pre-given unity and a stable tradition of the church, warranted by hierarchical governance. In other words, they discuss ecclesial conflict based on an ecclesiology that a priori denies any legitimacy of conflict in the church. With synodality as a key concept, Francis promotes a different ecclesiology. At stake is a broadening of participation in decision-making that is no longer drawn along clerical lines. Here, unity and consensus in the church are not envisioned as pre-given, but as goals of a dialogical process of patient listening. Synodality consequently makes space for differences and conflict in the church.

These different appraisals of ecclesial conflict call for scrutiny: Which theological status can we attribute to conflict in the church? And is there a way of understanding inner-ecclesial disagreements in ways that do not subject them by harmonizing them into an ideal of unity? In this contribution, I aim to develop a theological understanding of conflict that resists such pacification, in order to pave the way for an ecclesiological framework that allows us to do justice to the complexity of the problems targeted by the Amazon synod.

A Theory of Dissent

Jacques Rancière's political philosophy offers resources for such an endeavor. For him, politics and aesthetics interlock in the constitution of the 'world' of a community: Communities constitute their social order through a "distribution of the sensible".[2] This is the process of differentiation through which it defines what it considers to be visible, sayable and meaningful. For Rancière, 'distribution' has a double meaning, referring "on the one hand to that which allows for participation, and, on the other hand, to that which separates and excludes".[3] Accordingly, it is one of his central points that in any community there are those who have no part and no participation in the distribution of the sensible. Participation within a community rests on the exclusion of those who have no share. Rancière gives this share of the excluded a name—they are the "part of those who have no part".[4] He further argues that there are two ways of performing the distribution of the sensible and of counting those that have a share in a community. The first kind recognizes only those groups that actually have a part in it. It proceeds in a totalitarian way that reflects precisely the particular arrangements of visibility that are operative in a given community. Rancière calls this way of counting "consensus".[5] *Dissensus* in turn, the second way of counting, additionally names a community's part-of-no-part and thus inserts a gap that marks the excluded in its established order.[6] By naming the part-of-no-part, *dissensus* thus does not simply add a part that has hitherto been missing, but introduces a fundamentally different perception of reality that disrupts the totalitarian order of consensus and questions the 'normality' of its arrangements of in/visibility. For Rancière, accordingly, dissensus is not simply a confrontation of disparate interests or opinions that could be resolved through negotiation.[7] Such a confrontation follows the logic of consensus, which only sees what is 'there' and aims to settle a conflict of interest within a community that already shares in a distribution of the sensible. *Dissensus*, in contrast, goes

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[2] Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 36.

[3] Rancière, *Politics*, 36.

[4] Rancière, *Politics*, 33 et passim.

[5] Cf. Rancière, *Politics*, 42.

[6] Cf. Rancière, *Politics*, 69.

[7] Cf. Rancière, *Politics*, 80.

much further: it is a controversy about "what can be seen and what can be said about it" and "who is able to see something and qualified to speak".[8]

A Theology of Dissent

Rancière thus proposes a framework for explicating mechanisms of exclusion, based on which he develops definitions of consensus and *dissensus* that differ sharply from their conceptualization in the Roman Catholic Church. Here, consensus is indeed an orienting principle, while dissent has only had a short career as a theological term. It emerged in the 1960s controversies around *Humanae Vitae* that triggered an intense debate on the status of dissent: The Magisterium promulgated documents that regulate the relation between magisterium and theologians in restrictive ways. On the other hand, theological publications sought to offer the historical and systematic clarification for those circumstances in which dissent might play a legitimate ecclesial role. Thus, while both groups took very different positions on the distribution of authority over ecclesial theology, they shared a silent presupposition: both considered consensus in the Church as norm(al), and accordingly viewed dissent as an 'extraordinary' phenomenon at the margins of ecclesiality, whose legitimacy has to be either denied a priori, or carefully gauged. Rancière takes the opposite starting point: for him, dissent negotiates what counts as sensible in a community and thus is constitutive of community formation. Consensus, in contrast, is the maintenance of established participation arrangements that always also rest on exclusion.

Offering instruments to reflect on mechanisms of exclusion in community formation, Rancière's political philosophy provides us with resources to think in theologically new ways about participation, consensus and dissent in the Roman Catholic Church. It first challenges us to approach Roman Catholic discourses of consensus and unity carefully and perhaps even with hermeneutical suspicion: Are there situations in which the search for consensus does not lead to increased participation but reproduces established structures of ecclesial authority and remains limited to a conflict over the distribution of what already counts as sensible in the Roman Catholic Church? Beyond these ecclesiopolitical concerns, Rancière's definition of dissent is of highest theological relevance for an understanding of revelation. In Christian theology, revelation, too,

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[8] Rancière, *Politics*, 149.

concerns arrangements of in/visibility that emerge from mechanisms of exclusion: Those who are excluded from society are of indispensable significance for the appearance of God (Mt 25, 31–46). This passage unmistakably links the ability to see God to a reversal of social exclusion. God comes into view whenever there is a renegotiation of who can be seen and what can be said about them. God appears, we could say with Rancière, whenever the totalitarian ways of counting the parts of a community are disrupted. God can be seen when Rancièrian dissent takes place. Rancière thus opens intriguing trajectories to think of dissent as a principle of ecclesiogenesis. With him, we would no longer assume ideals of unity and consensus as warrants of ecclesial tradition. Instead, we could see conflict as having a genuine theological function. Representing Christ, church takes place when we point to the mechanisms of exclusion out of which community emerges.

Practicing Dissent

Reports from the Amazon Synod indicate that *such* dissent might actually have happened during the synod, as Gudrun Sailer's journalistic account shows: Even if it is still shaped by the rhetoric of harmony typical of consensus, it nevertheless speaks to the precarious inconclusiveness of a church that constitutes itself through dissent:

> Nobody presents ready-made answers, and even during debates on clerical office, everybody remains inquisitive, sympathetic […]. Heresy, schism, apostasy? I see, as so often during Francis' pontificate, a discrepancy between perceptions from outside the synod and how it sounds within. Its sound is soft, not dissonant. At no point have I perceived polemics or even base behaviour. Yes, there is reservation against certain themes, or weak applause, once even a moment of embarrassed silence […]. There is struggle, but not attempts to con. Only somebody who is not at the synod can assume that the final document is already written.[9]

In the midst of a rhetoric of amicability, Sailer does make visible that within the prescribed codex of consensual behaviour during the synod,

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[9] Gudrun Sailer, "Der vielfältige Klang der Amazonas-Synode," *katholisch.de*, October 15, 2019: https://www.katholisch.de/artikel/23262-der-vielfaeltige-klang-der-amazonas-synode (accessed Feb 22, 2020).

there was an open-ended negotiation about what can be seen and who is qualified to say something about it. Rancièrian dissent took place.

At the same time, by speaking so hesitantly about conflicts that remain nearly inaudible as they irrupt within the established order of consensus, Sailer's report points to one further characteristic of dissent. Dissent, Rancière says, takes place then when the 'normal' order of consensus is disrupted. Dissent, therefore, cannot simply replace the order of consensus, but is critically at work within it. It is thus not a permanent institution, but an "accidental, local and precarious activity, that is always close to disappearing. And therefore also always close to reappearing".[10] Dissent takes place then when those excluded from an established order appear as a gap, and lead to renegotiations of its distribution of the sensible.

Similarly, Mt 25 also shows that such revelations of the part-without-part are everything but self-evident. Here, too, there are those who stick to a community's consensus and see only those who have a share. For those who do not see the excluded, however, a vision of God is foreclosed. God's presence thus remains dependent on renegotiations of arrangements of societal in/visibility. It is not a given good, but runs counter to established orders of participation, both outside and within the church. Such volatility, of course, makes dissent a dangerous principle for a church that strives to be the sacrament of divine presence as it appears in the excluded. It challenges the church to become sign and instrument of a dissent that disrupts established regimes of in/visibility. As representation of divine presence, church takes place when the part-without-part irrupts as a gap within totalitarian regimes of participation. In such a search for the anonymous presence of Christ in the blind spots of societal arrangements, the church thus loses its self-evidence. Its locus has to be continuously redefined. If we use dissent as a criterion of ecclesiality, we can no longer consider the church—and representation within the church—as a given good, whose (more or less) fair distribution can be fought over. Instead, we have to think of the church as an event that becomes a representation of God's presence then when constellations of participation are unsettled.

Therefore, while we cannot build a stable institution out of dissent, its retrieval as an ecclesial principle will be concerned with practices of discernment that seek to expose the blind spots in ecclesial distributions of

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[10] Jacques Rancière, "Überlegungen zur Frage, was heute Politik heißt," *Dialektik. Zeitschrift für Kulturphilosophie* 1 (2003): 113–122, here 122. (my translation).

the sensible. Taking the Amazon synod as an example, questions such as these have to be asked: Do the reforms envisioned by the synod follow a logic of consensus or dissent? Do they consensually reproduce the established ecclesial order and are solely concerned with a redistribution of what already appears as a given in the church—or do they indeed facilitate dissent: a renegotiation of what is visible, sayable and meaningful in the Roman Catholic Church?

The synod's controversial debates about the *viri probati* offer rich material for such a critical practice of dissent.[11] Discussed as a trajectory for administering sacraments in Amazonian parishes despite the region's low numbers of priests, a possible (re-)introduction of this institution was also interpreted as a sign that flexibility in the Roman Catholic Church's understanding of ordination is possible. The *viri probati* thus stand for a reform that opens new possibilities of ecclesial participation. A closer investigation of who is to be granted access to sacramental representation through this institution, however, invites us to take a more nuanced position. If men only can access the rank of *personae probatae*, this institution re-inscribes the patriarchal patterns that distribute authority in the church, and may solidify these also in indigenous communities, accompanied by the heteronormative assumptions that are implied in the demand for elders to live in stable family relations. In addition, as Charles Collins argues, the institution of the *viri probati* is also prone to re-establishing colonial power structures in the global church and can thus propel another pattern of ecclesial exclusion that distributes sacramental authority along racial lines: The elders would receive ordination like priests, but would "exercise […] different roles […]. Elders would most often represent indigenous communities in a diocese led by a non-indigenous bishop assisted by

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[11] This focus on the *personae probatae* should by no means detract from the fact that the priority of the synod was to devise an ecclesial response to the global ecological crisis; pastoral reforms were discussed insofar as they contribute to ecological conversion. However, the significance of the *viri probati* debate in this very context cannot be dismissed. Among others, two points call for a critical appraisal. First, can the church believably call for *buen vivir* for all, which includes just human relations, when patriarchal discourses continue to shape inner-ecclesial structures? Second, in which ways can a focus on the church's extra-ecclesial mission towards global climate justice and its advocacy for the marginalized become a (perhaps all too convenient) tool to detract from inner-ecclesial problems of injustice?

non-indigenous priests, meaning an uncomfortable racial element would exist among the two classes of priests."[12]

    With Rancière's analytical instruments, we can thus show that the institution of the *viri probati* runs the risk of reproducing, rather than challenging, the established boundaries of sexuality, race and clericalism along which sacramental authority is distributed in the church. This diagnosis, however, should by no means serve to discredit the synod's reform efforts. Rather, it challenges us to be mindful of the blind spots that inevitably inscribe themselves into any arrangement of representation and participation. The critical perspective of dissent allows us to highlight that no reform proposal can present us with a definite solution that is free from exclusions. Yet, it does not deprive us of agency. Dissent does not translate into a stable institution, but neither does it exempt us from the struggle for arrangements of participation that are—perhaps—less exclusionary, always knowing that we will not fully succeed in this endeavour. The perspective of dissent thus introduces a moment of provisionality into our strivings for a just world, which might enable us to account precisely for the complexities of the problems that the synod sought to address. When everything is interconnected, we must not hope for unambivalent solutions.

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[12] Charles Collins, "A married priesthood not the real revolution in 'ordained elders' proposal," *Crux Now*, October 9th, 2019.

Theology of Church Reform and Institutional Crisis: Reading Yves Congar in the Twenty-First Century

Massimo Faggioli

CHURCH REFORM FROM VATICAN II TO POPE FRANCIS

The theological and ecclesial work of countless theologian provided our generation with the most engaging examples of the contribution of systematic reflection to the attempt to reform the Catholic Church, its thinking and institutions. This is an ongoing attempt that finds itself in a situation that is, in many respects, quite different from the twentieth-century paradigms of "reform" in which Catholicism still operates both at the intellectual and institutional level.

Catholicism embodies a strange paradox. Many people still see the Catholic Church as the symbol of immutability, the inability to change and attachment to the status quo. But at the same time, very few Catholics—at least those with a voice in the public square—seem to have been happy with the *status quo*. This paradox is particularly visible today,

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as we do not have the two usual, competing narratives on the current state of Catholicism; that is, a conservative narrative that supports the institutional status quo versus a change-and-reform narrative. Instead, in the context of the epoch-making sex-abuse crisis in the Catholic Church we see both sides attacking the institutional status quo identified with the clerical system, from which Pope Francis distanced himself at the beginning of his pontificate.[1]

On one side, the liberal-progressive, Vatican II narrative calls for the empowerment of the laity and women, decentralization, collegiality and synodality, dialogue and ecumenism, and inclusiveness. On the other side, the counter-reform or the "reform of the reform" narrative points to the dramatic shortage of priests and of vocations in religious orders, to loss of "identity" in Catholic schools, the rise of the "nones" and so forth—all supposedly the fault of a so-called "Catholic lite" that was allegedly the result of the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar period. The tensions that marked the preparation and the celebration of the Bishops' Synod for the Amazon region of October 2019, but also the reception of pope Francis' post-synodal exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (published on February 12, 2020), are one more evidence of this particular Catholic moment.

One reason for this situation is the widening gap between the theology of reform elaborated at the time of Vatican II and certain characteristics of the post-conciliar Church—for the post-conciliar period of the twenty-first century. There is no question that the notion of "Church reform" is one of the key elements to understanding the pontificate of Pope Francis. Antonio Spadaro SJ, and Carlos Maria Galli have edited a large volume of essays that deal with this theme and provide a roadmap for reforms that see in the Franciscan era a precious window of opportunity.[2] But at the same time the idea of "reform" is also one of the theological ideas that has gone through significant transformations since Vatican II.

The most important theological contribution on Church reform in our times came in the period immediately before and after the council from

[1] See F. Ceragioli, "'Il clericalismo è una peste nella Chiesa'. Riflessioni a partire dalla *Evangelii gaudium* e dal magistero complessivo di papa Francesco", *Archivio Teologico Torinese* 24, no. 1 (2018): 147–162; J. Hanvey, "'Sradicare la cultura dell'abuso'. La Lettera di papa Francesco al Popolo di Dio", *Civiltà Cattolica (La)* 169, no. 4 (2018): 271–278.

[2] See *For a Missionary Reform of the Church. The Civiltà Cattolica Seminar*, eds. Antonio Spadaro, SJ, and Carlos Maria Galli. Foreword by Massimo Faggioli (New York/Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2017).

the French Dominican Yves Congar (1905–1995), in his most important book, *True and False Reform in the Church*. Originally published in 1950, it was one of his writings that attracted the attention of the Holy Office and cost Congar, beginning in 1952, years of investigations, silence, and exile.[3] A newer edition from 1968 was translated into English only a few years ago.[4]

Congar's Four Conditions for Reform

Congar specified four conditions for reforming the Church "without provoking a schism". The first condition is the *primacy of charity and the pastoral dimension* of the Church. He says that the pastoral ministry is a great school of truth and that prophetic reform takes place in the Church that already exists. It is not about creating another Church, but one that is different: "It should not result in an ecclesial novelty, but rather should *renew* the church as an existing reality. The church pre-exists the reform effort, and therefore it is not the object of discovery, retrieval, or creation".[5]

The second condition is *remaining in communion* with the "all of it" of the Church, the "total truth" of the Church. This is understood through a dialectic of center-peripheries, institution and life of the Church. One can break ranks on some issues without necessarily breaking away from the Church. The fact that the Church has a center is the guarantee of this freedom: "Only through communion with the whole body, which itself is subject to the guidance of the magisterium, can someone grasp a truth in its totality".[6]

The third condition is the *need to be patient*. Church reform does not work as an "all or nothing". The Church does not like the *fait accompli*, except when it is clearly about remaining faithful to a principle: "The innovator, whose reform turns into a schism, lacks patience. He does not respect the slowness either of God or of the church, or the delays that come into everyone's life".[7]

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[3] See Yves Congar, *Journal of a Theologian 1946–1956*. Edited with notes by Étienne Fouilloux. Translated by Denis Minns (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2015; Original French: Paris, Cerf, 2000), 235–287.

[4] See Yves Congar, *True and False Reform in the Church*, transl. Paul Philibert (Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2010. Original French: Paris, Cerf, 1950, 1968).

[5] Congar, *True and False Reform*, 216.

[6] Congar, *True and False Reform*, 230.

[7] Congar, *True and False Reform*, 265.

And the fourth condition is that true renewal and reform must be a *return to the principle of the tradition*. In this sense, Congar says, the liturgical reform has been important for the totality of the Catholic Church and not just its liturgy: "to tell the truth, all big problems facing contemporary Catholicism are such that solving them with quick and mechanical adaptations would lead to catastrophe. Such problems require a lifelong effort and the collaboration of all the people for a long time".[8]

Confines of Congar's Theology of Reform in the Church of Today

These four conditions set a much higher bar for today's Church than the one that existed in 1950 or in 1968. For example, a theological critique of Pope Francis' emphasis on mercy does not accept "pastorality" as a criterion for reforming ecclesial praxis (especially on the issues surrounding divorced and remarried Catholics). Remaining within the "communion of the Church" today is much more complicated given that it is a more complex, fragmented and diverse communion geographically and culturally.

The call to be patient is also much harder to accept at a time when a large number of believers have a strong impression that many promises made by Vatican II have never been implemented these last fifty years. As for "tradition", today it is often like a no man's land between the rock of traditionalism and the hard place of a largely de-traditionalized intellectual and social environment.

But there are three other features of the present ecclesial landscape that reframe Congar's theology of reform.

The first is related to the new, post-modern proclivity to imagine Church reform (or counter-reform) in terms of sub-churches with idiosyncratic "obediences" (to this or that pope, to this or that Church leader) guided by a mentality that is shaped by the culture of branding. This is the capitulation of both progressives and traditionalists to the "identities", which entails limits to the ability to imagine Church reform theologically and ecclesially. The sense of fundamental unity in a Church that is able to embrace all identities (ideological, ethnic-racial, gender) is not the same as the Church of Congar's time. This is also related to the virtualization of ecclesial identities, where a given Catholic identity is shaped less by what

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[8] Congar, *True and False Reform*, 298.

the People of God experience in the Church and more by what is heard or seen distant from the lived experience with other Catholics.

The second feature is the disconnect between the institutions to be reformed and academic theology and its ability to propose Church reform. Congar advised all priest-theologians to remain in pastoral ministry. But today academic theology is much more in the hands of lay people, for whom it is difficult to be an integral part of the pastoral ministry in their local Churches or communities. This is one of the factors in the complicated relationship between Pope Francis' Congarian theology of reform and academic theologians, as he expressed in his speech to the 2015 international theological congress held at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina:

> Not infrequently a kind of opposition is constructed between theology and pastoral care, as though they were two opposing, separate realities, which have nothing to do with one another […]. We create a false opposition between theology and pastoral care; between the believer's reflection and the believer's life; life, then, has no space for reflection and reflection finds no space in life. The great Fathers of the Church, Irenaeus, Augustine, Basil, Ambrose, to name a few, were great theologians because they were great pastors.[9]

Congar's theology of reform finds an obstacle today in some aspects of the professionalization of academic theology and in the re-clericalization of the institutional Church. In some contexts where the Catholic Church is politically and theologically polarized, some priests and bishops are uncomfortable with having lay people who are academic theologians visibly involved in the pastoral ministry of parishes and dioceses. Even Catholic school administrators, and probably some of the colleagues in other departments, are also nervous, but for different reasons. Most obvious is the demands parishes would make on these lay theologians and the pressure such involvement would put on their families. Thus the democratization of professional theology in terms of more laity and fewer clerics has deep implications on the idea and praxis of Church reform.

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[9] Francis, *Video message to participants in the international theological congress held at the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1–3 September 2015) https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/messages/pont-messages/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150903_videomessaggio-teologia-buenos-aires.html (accessed February 11, 2020).

The third feature is probably the most difficult to deal with. At the beginning of *True and False Reform*, Congar showed confidence that the Catholic Church was able to begin reforming itself because the old problem of corruption and abuses had been solved. Congar wrote that during the crisis triggered by the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century the Church was lacking "a purity of spirit, resources and pastors" – assets that, in fact, the Church restored at the Second Vatican Council. Congar showed a fundamental optimism about Church reform in the twentieth century, compared to the reform movements of the twelfth (St. Francis and St. Dominic) and sixteenth centuries (Erasmus, Cardinal Ximenes): "Some reforms were accomplished or at least advocated in the name of a return to sources higher than church canons, canons whose holiness was not in question but that needed to be transcended by the stimulus of reform. […] This is also the case without any doubt with respect to the current spirit of reform. It is not a question of reforming abuses – there are hardly any to reform. It is rather a question of renewing structures".[10] The stories of clerical sex abuse and financial misconduct in our "transparency society"[11] paint a different picture of the institutional church than the one from Congar's time and have an impact on a Catholic theology of reform.

CONGAR'S THEOLOGY OF REFORM AND THE SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The sexual abuse crisis has put into serious question the paradigms of Church reform of the twentieth century and of the ecclesiology of Vatican II: this also affects our reading of Congar today.

One key paradigm that was typical of the ecclesiology in the period leading up to Vatican II, of Vatican II itself, and of the first post-conciliar period was that Church reform now is *about structure, not corruption*. As Yves Congar put it in his *True and False Reform*, reform is needed for two areas: "the area of sins" (the Church as such does not sin; the individual members do) and "the area of social-historical mistakes" (received ideas and attitudes; need of purification from Christendom).[12] If the need for structural renewal is still there, certainly the sexual abuse crisis cast a

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[10] Congar, *True and False Reform*, 51–52.

[11] See Byung-Chul Han, *The Transparency Society* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015).

[12] Congar, *True and False Reform*, 101.

different light on Congar's assumption (and not only Congar's) that the problem of corruption in the Church had been solved during the Counter-Reformation period. In light of the systemic pattern of cover-up of sexual abuses committed by clergy, no less in need of re-examination is the ecclesiological notion that the Church as such does not sin, only the individual members do.

A second paradigm of Church reform now in crisis is *the episcopalist paradigm*. There is not only an issue of the institutional culture of Church structures dealing with abuse crisis (e.g. the Roman Curia and the papacy, the national bishops' conferences, the religious orders),[13] but also and more fundamentally a question about the theology of the episcopate and the role of the episcopate in the government of the Church. The abuse crisis pushes the Church to take a new look at great ecclesiological achievements of Vatican II such as the collegiality and sacramentality of the episcopacy. Congar's major contribution to the preparation of the ecclesiological debate on episcopacy at Vatican II must be re-read in the present context of the failure of episcopal leadership in dealing with the ecclesial crisis.[14]

Another paradigm of Church reform that is in crisis is *reform as a process in communion and in trust*. The abuse crisis is also an ecclesiological crisis that goes beyond the collapse of authority embodied by certain Church leaders: it signals a collapse of the authority of the magisterium in a way that is comparable to the effects of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in terms of tension between the moral agency of the conscience of the individual and the necessary ecclesial and ecclesiastical dimensions of Christian life. Congar edited the second version of *True and False Reform* in the early post-Vatican II years, taking into account in the new edition the students' movements in the spring of 1968, but before the effects of Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (July 1968) for the relations between Church and theology.

Finally, the paradigm of *reform regarding more lay involvement* is also in crisis. It is impossible to rethink church governance and clericalism today without considering a certain crisis of the paradigm of the "theology of

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[13] See Marie Keenan, "The Organizational and Institutional Culture of the Catholic Church", in *Child Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 24–53.

[14] Especially *L'ecclésiologie au XIXᵉ siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 1960 in the series "Unam Sanctam" edited by Congar) and *L'episcopat et l'Église universelle*, eds. Yves Congar and Bernard Dominique Dupuy (Paris, Cerf 1962 in the same series "Unam Sanctam").

the laity" that spans from the 1950s to the post-Vatican II period until a few years ago. Congar's theology of the laity in his 1953 *Jalons* already looked old-aged at Vatican II.[15]

Conclusions

Congar's theology of reform represents a fundamental step on the Catholic Church's path towards a new relationship with history and modernity. There is no possible path forward that does not begin with that step, denies that moment of development, or dreams to go back to a pre-Vatican II Church. On other hand, in order to be faithful to Vatican II, at almost sixty years from the beginning of the council, theology must acknowledge the inevitable limits and the unintended consequences of an intellectual tradition shaped by the first half of the twentieth century in a Europe-dominated Catholic Church. The sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church represents the loudest call to Church reform in our times, and also a call to re-examine the contribution of Vatican II and its theological fathers, of whom the most important of all was probably Yves Congar.

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[15] See Yves Marie-Joseph Congar, *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat* (Paris: Cerf, 1953. English translation: Westminster MD: Newman Press, 1957). A detailed critique of Congar's theology of the laity today in Marco Vergottini, *Il cristiano testimone. Congedo dalla teologia del laicato* (Bologna: EDB, 2017).

Society and Gender

Sisterhood of the Earth: An Emergence of an Ecological Civilization and an Ecozoic Era

Elaine Padilla

The church is not only of the Spirit but also a church of dust. When speaking of its *dustiness*, a commonly held theological understanding is the church as sacrament in the world. This means that an aspect of the nature of the church is to be a sign of the divine presence manifested, though not exclusively, as an audible event of a new creation in the world that is socially and historically palpable.[1] The church as sacrament renders the Logos-Sophia audibly present and the graces of the Spirit-Sophia efficacious through a dialog between word, breath, and world. This trinitarian message can be compared to a tree.[2] The sophianic voice as mother, sister,

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[1] See Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), vol. 4, 253–281.

[2] Tertullian, "Against Praxeas," in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. III, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 602–603. For a sophianic trinitarian model, see also Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Religious*

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and friend prophetically calls out the church (*ekklesia*) through the roots, the shoots, and the fruit of the earth. If so, what would be the trinitarian cry at the street corners as deforestation, pollution, ecocide, and natural scarcity increase?

So in order for the church to further embody its sacramentality, it would need to change its theological orientation toward the world, particularly by adopting an *organic* mission. Transformation of the church can start by uprooting itself from its androcentricism, reflected in esoteric liturgies and anthropocentric orthopraxes. The church can then ground itself in its earthen soil by listening to the wisdom of the Logos-Sophia and the visceral groanings of the Spirit-Sophia that softly utter the unintelligible words of the other-than-humans (Rom. 8: 22–27). Could their strange tongues be signifying the need for a more *universe*-ally oriented sacramentality?

This humble invitation, if accepted, can provoke a change toward a mission in which liturgy and civil engagements can prophetically embody an eschatological vision of planetary fruitfulness. This type of response is exemplified through communities of Catholic sisters that, for a lack of a better term, have been called "green sisters."[3] Through their eyes, one can look at the church of the twenty-first century with hope for a new earth flourishing in the now (Rev. 21). Upon briefly describing the sacramentality of the church and a development toward an organic ecclesiology, this chapter listens to the message of two green sisters: Sister Gail Worcelo of the Green Mountain Monastery in Greensboro, Vermont, and Sister Dolores Mitch of the Maryknoll Sisters in Monrovia, California.[4] With their wisdom-call in mind, this chapter argues for an ecological mission,

Discourse (New York: A Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001) and Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological and Nuclear Earth* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

[3] See Sarah McFarland Taylor, *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2009) and John E. Carroll, *Sustainability and Spirituality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

[4] For information on the Green Mountain Monastery and the community of the Maryknoll Sisters, visit their websites at: http://www.greenmountainmonastery.org and https://www.maryknollsisters.org (accessed February 23, 2020). I want to thank Eugene Shirley, president and CEO of Pando Populus, for his support on making possible the interview with the Maryknoll Sisters. Pando Populus is a nonprofit producer of initiatives and events in the Los Angeles County that aims at fast-tracking the region toward a more ecologically balanced way of life—what Pope Francis calls "integral ecology" and Pando's founding chair John Cobb describes as "ecological civilization." To know more about Pando Populus, visit its website at: https://pandopopulus.com (accessed February 23, 2020).

specifically, in the areas of liturgy and practice, which if appropriated, the church can help usher a new epoch—an ecological civilization and an Ecozoic era.[5]

The church is dusty in its sacramental embodiments. Sacraments are signs through which the church embodies the creative spark of divine word and breath that sustains the world. They make efficacious the free giftedness of divine presence as Logos-Sophia and Spirit-Sophia in the whole of planetary existence. For thinkers like Karl Rahner, while divine presence and world are irreducible to each other, the divine signification can be perceived through an-other than the divine self.[6] I would argue, therefore, that God finds the divine self precisely as a Trinity via hovering—like a bird-mother over its egg—and through comforting—as a hen gathers its chicks under its wings.[7] In this regard, the earth embodies Sophia who was with God at the foundations of the earth and whose face the earth continuously mirrors. Consequently, the church can find itself precisely also through the other-than-human in the same manner as the Logos-Sophia and the Spirit-Sophia signify their creative and vivifying presence through the world.[8]

Several stages in the church demonstrate that this kind of sophianic sacramentality has been fueling an impetus toward an organic mission in the church. In our time, an embrace of ecofeminism has positively impacted the prophetic work of the church in the world. Thinkers like Sallie McFague developed an ecological theology that spoke of the end times as hope for "a new creation" and as "living from a vision for a different present based on a new future."[9] Ivone Gebara, furthermore, has advocated for an eschatological vision that integrates the whole body of the cosmos, of a human consciousness constituted by its interrelations, and of

[5] McFarland Taylor explains that the term "Ecozoic" translates as "house of life" which reflects a "viable dream of a mutually enhancing human presence within an ever-renewing organic-based Earth community" (*Green Sisters*, 116, n. 3). Through their "green monasticism," the sisters are working on ushering an Ecozoic era (116–18).

[6] Karl Rahner, S.J., *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4, 240.

[7] See Hildgaard of Bingen, *Mystical Writings* (New York: Crossroads, 1990), 91–93 and Anselm of Canterbury, *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm of Canterbury* (New York Penguin Books, 1973), 153–156.

[8] See Origen, *On First Principles* and Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Yonkers, Saint Vladimir's Press, 1997), 80–81.

[9] Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1993), 198.

interpersonal societies that nurture diversification and interdependency.[10] Other developments have laid the foundation for an organic ecclesiology. Sarah McFarland Taylor, in her study of various communities and organizations of green sisters, highlights movements like The Sister Formation movement (1950s), the activism of the sisters (1960s and 1970s), the formation of the Immaculate Heart Community in Los Angeles (1970s), the resurgence of "contemplative life and monasticism" (1980s and 1990s), feminist theories (in particular, that have integrated a concern for ecology with their critique against domination and oppression of women), and earth-based North American spirituality.[11]

Priests and mentors like Thomas Berry have also paved the way for continued development of beliefs and practices that promote the well-being of the planet. For instance, Thomas Berry has been keenly influential in changing the lives of sisters like Gail Worcelo. She met Thomas Berry in 1984 during her novitiate with the Passionist Nuns of Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania. She explains that their joint novitiate program "with the Passionist Priests of which Berry was a member," taught them life-transforming principles on the role that humans can play "in the great story of the Universe." She added, "Of immense significance was a paper by Thomas Berry entitled, 'Women Religious: The Voice of Earth.' In this paper, Berry pointed out that historically, religious communities have been founded to meet the needs of the human community (hospitals, schools, social services…). There has never been a community founded to meet the needs of the Earth Community."[12] Sister Gail responded to this call and enthusiastically agreed, "Yes, let's found that community!" Together with Thomas Berry and Sister Bernadette, the Sisters of the Earth Community, known also as the Green Mountain Monastery and the Thomas Berry Sanctuary, was co-founded "for the healing and protection of Earth and its life systems."

Undeniably, the encyclical *Laudato Si'* of Pope Francis has also been a major source of impetus and support. As Sister Gail shared when asked on a source of inspiration, "*Laudato Si'* of Pope Francis has made a huge contribution to waking up consciousness in world and Church." Yet much remains to be done in order for the church to embody its *organic mission.*

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[10] Ivone Gebara, "Ecofeminism," in *Religion and the Environment: Critical Concepts in Religious Studies*, ed. Roger S. Gotlieb (New York: Routledge, 2010), 112–124.

[11] McFarland Taylor, *Green Sisters*, 28–43.

[12] Thomas Berry, "Women Religious as the Voice of the Earth," unpublished.

As exemplified in this encyclical, the church can benefit from integrating a cosmological and evolutionary lens that parallels the trinitarian relations. For Sister Gail, the universe has direction, moving in three directions simultaneously, toward greater differentiation, deeper interiority, and more profound communion. These Trinitarian dynamics of the cosmos can serve as cosmological roots for a theology grounded in foundational principles of the universe over 13.7 billion years. Sister Gail reflects, "Our symbol is designed to represent our community as Emergent within these Trinitarian Dynamics, symbolized by the ancient Christian image of the three fish reflecting a universe of mutual indwelling and intimate self sharing." If these principles are integrated into the institutional life and structural designs of the church, including the Catholic Church, a greater alignment with the universe could result. Sister Gail courageously concludes that the violation of the principle of Differentiation, for example, has resulted in dishonoring "the full expression of women's gifts within the total life of the Church."

Further still, an organic mission would remain incomplete unless cosmological views such as these can inspire *an earth-grounded liturgical shift* in its sacramental life. To name a few liturgical practices, the divine word and breath manifested sacramentally through icons and images that embody the divine feminine can bring into sharper focus a vision of a trinitarian interconnectedness being manifested planetarily. For example, the Sisters of the Earth Community situates itself within the larger cosmological earth processes being represented through a sacramental life reminiscent of the prayers and praises of St. Francis "through Sister Moon and the stars," as *Laudato Si'* indicates.[13] And since for the sisters, liturgy can arise from the natural world, some of the most common depictions of divine immanence in creation are the icons "Mary of the Cosmos" and "Black Madonna." This type of sacramentality can be an expression of what Christopher Pramuk has termed the "gaping wound" of the divine feminine in our social unconscious, which iconographers like William Hart McNichols depict in their representations of the moon, the figure of women, and Mary in their icons.[14]

[13] Pope Francis, Encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care of Our Common Home* 87, at http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (accessed February 20, 2020).

[14] Christophr Pramuk, *The Artist Alive: Explorations in Music, Art, & Theology* (Winona: Anselm Academic, 2019), 230.

Sister Gail, when asked about their liturgical and sacramental life, responded in the following manner. "The patroness and guide of our community is Our Lady of Czestochowa under the tile of The Black Madonna. My family roots are in Poland and Russia and this Black Madonna has always held a significant place in Polish life. The Black Madonna has to do with the re-sacralization of the planet and the holiness of all matter in the Cosmos." She added:

> She is dark, of Earth, the sacred feminine grounded in the body. As an archetype she comes at this time of planetary collapse to guide us through our destructive patterns of separation consciousness and lovingly bring us back to our essential nature of connection with the whole. There is a story in Polish Lore that says this Mary is dark because she has come from the fireball, the initial flaring forth, journeyed through 13.7 billion years of cosmic unfolding and fallen to Earth with the Christ Divinity in her matter. Her presence is a true manifestation of the divinity animating all matter in the universe.

Similarly, at the home of the Maryknoll Sisters in Monrovia, the Lady of Guadalupe, patroness and protectress of the Americas, is a figure that is central to the identity of the sisters. She stands under a shelter made out of rafters and hanging plants that enclose her. Benches also partly encircle her for people to meditate as they are surrounded by the low desert beauty of their campus. For Sister Dolores, *La Guadalapana* makes visible and reflects the deep spirituality and roots of Latin American Catholics. She appeared in the form of a Native American, the unprivileged, the oppressed. Likewise, she protects the earth and is a benefactor of all living things, in particular, it's most vulnerable among the species.

Because of earth-grounded sacramentalities such as these, many of these communities of eco-sisters highly regard the earth as a significant participant and wisdom-bearer. Sister Gail explains:

> The Black Madonna demands embodiment, so sacramentals include the visual (images and Icons), but also taste, (fruits of this land and honey from bees), smell, (essential oils, flower essences, and fragrant herbs) hearing (music and bird song) touch (soil, water, feathers, and stones). We also break open the visual Icon to include the holy beings of the Earth Community, among them, a portrait of a wolf.

For the Sisters of Earth, the entire mountain is their monastery (hence the name of Green Mountain Monastery). So for them also the innumerable living things in their property are members of their community. In listening to them, she adds, "we are continually shaken out of our complete anthropocentric view point." An example of this was Robert, a butterfly with a torn wing that appeared in their space. She says, "He appeared and called forth practices that we could have not designed ourselves! Practices that deepened our sense of care, compassion, love for the lowliest."

When thinking of changes needed for an organic ecclesiology which sacramental mission embodies its dustiness of word and breath, another element of transformation can be *earth-grounded activisms* with which to make an impact in the world. The Maryknoll Sisters of Monrovia, for example, have shaped their long-held vision of integral ecology through a mission that responds to the local call for a more sustainable future. Recently, upon attending the international conference "Seizing an Alternative: Towards an Ecological Civilization" held in Claremont, California in June 2015, several sisters invited Eugene Shirley, CEO of Pando Populus, into their campus.

Since June 2018, together with Pando, the Maryknoll Sisters are reimagining their campus so that they can be a viable model of integral ecology in the Los Angeles County. Their campus has welcomed several college students from the Los Angeles basin to conceptualize urban farming, zero-emission architecture, and water containment specifically native and suited for living in densely high populations and low desert areas. Because most institutions of higher education have a secular mission, Eugene Shirley explains that Pando serves as the partner that can connect these institutions to the sacred. According to him, "the Maryknoll Sisters of Monrovia are attempting to live out *Laudato Si'* in order to address the ecological challenges in the here and now." In doing so, they are seizing a historical opportunity to enhance their long history of being relevant in society by becoming also an ecological religious community.

Education in partnership with those who in the community who can better inform the church on best earth-practices can be essential to activism. Some of these partnerships already exist among religious communities. For instance, the Maryknoll Sisters of Monrovia have welcomed members in its community who have resided in the past in other environmental communities, have attended workshops offered at the Green Mountain Monastery, and are members of international religious networks devoted to ecological causes. The Maryknoll Sisters have also found ways

to utilize resources of neighboring organizations and collaborated with efforts that promote the protection of the waterways and of seeds and native plants. In addition, through talks offered by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory of NASA in Pasadena, they have educated the public and distributed material on the effects of global warming on the ocean.[15]

In partnership with Pando, the Monrovia community is also becoming a national learning center for the development of greater awareness of the potential for an urban development that is sustainable. During February 2020, for example, they partnered with the California Interfaith Power and Light in hosting 10 students from Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, for a week-long immersion program.[16] With an emphasis on religious institutions, students focused on the intersections between faith traditions and the climate justice movement, as per Middlebury College. They explored urban models that minimize the human footprint on the low desert (and already fragile) conditions that characterize the densely populated area.

Likewise, the Green Mountain Monastery has opened its monastery as an educational campus to their neighboring communities and abroad. The Sisters of Earth of Green Mountain "lead programs/retreats" at their monastery and throughout the world and currently are founding an extension of their monastery and opening another Thomas Berry Sanctuary in Indonesia. The vision is for the Green Mountain Monastery to become a space for "deep listening, simplicity, healing and restoration through direct experience with the community of life on this land." For those who cannot visit, they make it possible, via Zoom, for individuals and communities to engage in "ecological grief." These virtual community gatherings are called "Grieving All the Way Through."

Despite this integral sacramentality, a lack of support for these green communities shows evidence of ecclesiastical resistance for adopting a *dusty* mission, which, as Sister Gail puts it, "is incomprehensible at this time of planetary collapse!" A change in mission might result not only in greater support for them but also as the church listens to their sophianic words, it can become more universe-ally organic. Is the church failing to promote a model of life that evokes in us an increased capacity to feel

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[15] For more information, visit its website at: https://www.jpl.nasa.gov (accessed February 23, 2020).

[16] For more information, visit its website at: https://www.interfaithpower.org (accessed February 23, 2020).

deeply the entrails of the planet, whose wounds the Logos-Sophia and the Spirit-Sophia share? The *ekklesia*, the one being "called out" to be a sacrament in the world, could listen to the knowledge and love embodied in and through the other-than-humans and further participate in ushering a new earth as much as a new heaven in our time. As the church groans together with the trinity of life, it can adopt a mission of dust that integrates planetary liturgies and that participates in public efforts that support an integral ecology. Perhaps then our planet further can emerge as an ecological civilization that births an Ecozoic era. This is a change that we all require quite urgently.

Developing a Virtue of Eating Well: *Laudato Sí* and Animal Economies

Matthew Eaton

In *Laudato Sí*, Pope Francis calls Catholics and all people of good-will "to move forward in a bold cultural revolution," embodying a "revolution of tenderness" that rejects sovereign powers that perpetrate ecological violence and animal cruelty.[1] The principal powers to resist in this context are the rapacious capitalist industries that annihilate and consume the more-than-human in order to maximize profit. Yet, while Francis recognizes the sinfulness of capitalist greed and condemns anthropogenic ecological and animal violence, the concrete nature of ecologically violent economies and paths toward revolution receive little attention. Francis' revolutionary ethic concerning the more-than-human must be pushed further. Insofar as modern food economies exist via unsustainable and unnecessarily cruel production methods, I argue that responsibility exists to resist and withdraw from such systems insofar as possible, re-imagining what it means to

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[1] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, May 24, 2015), 114 (hereafter LS); *Evangelii Gaudium* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, November 24, 2013), 88.

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"eat well" as a path toward a revolution in global food economies.[2] To eat well necessarily entails a willingness to sacrifice animal sacrifice, which begins to take shape—at least in a Catholic setting—through the re-imagination and re-integration of ascetic, virtuous fasting driven by justice for Earth and our more-than-human neighbors.

Laudato Sí and Animal Economies

Laudato Sí is clear that the more-than-human is inherently valuable, though this assertion remains anthropocentric.[3] In a discussion of animal experimentation and genetic modification, Francis insists "that experimentation on animals is morally acceptable only 'if it remains within reasonable limits [and] contributes to caring for or saving human lives' [106]. The *Catechism* firmly states that human power has limits and that 'it is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly.'"[4] The instrumentalization of animals is thus not condemned if it serves human interests, but neither is it blindly embraced as this would violate human dignity. While this passage ignores the will of the animal—human dignity is at stake here—it does not ignore creaturely value absolutely.[5] Other passages, however, assert the inherent value of non-humans beyond a reductionist humanism. Inherent value is extended to creatures when Frances demands that we not consider any "species merely as potential 'resources' to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value

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[2] Jacques Derrida, "'Eating Well,' or the Calculation of the Subject: An interview with Jacques Derrida," in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, edited by E. Cadava, P. Connor and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), 96–119.

[3] The encyclical asserts—in a section decrying anthropocentrism no less—that "Christian thought sees human beings as possessing a particular dignity above other creatures." LS, 115. A recognition that non-humans have value in the face of a human species that is fundamentally more dignified does not escape metaphysical anthropocentrism as the encyclical would like to claim.

[4] LS, 130.

[5] The will of the animal as the basis for ethics is drawn from Arthur Schopenhauer. See S. Puryear, "Schopenhauer on the Rights of Animals," *European Journal of Philosophy* 25, no. 2 (2017): 250–269; R. Gunderson, "Animal Epistemology and Ethics in Schopenhauerian Metaphysics," *Environmental Ethics* 35, no. 3 (2013): 349–361. Gerard Mannion is one Catholic theologian who recognized the possibility of making such a connection between Schopenhauer and theology. See Gerard Mannion, *Schopenhauer, Religion, and Morality: The Humble Path to Ethics* (London: Routledge, 2017).

in themselves."[6] There is then hope for further development in Catholic thinking based on this recognition of creatureliness, but humanity will likely always retain its power within the Church's moral value hierarchy. Nevertheless, *Laudato Sí* is concerned with industries and economies that exploit animal bodies. Yet, it provides little concrete guidance on how to treat our fellow creatures.[7] A concern for eating-well in the context of ecological health and compassion toward animals is, of course, an obvious area in which to extend Catholic thought and ethics.

While difficulties exist in sorting through an ethic of eating well, any a priori assumption of the sovereignty of omnivorous diets must be questioned in Catholic ethics. We might begin by addressing the globally problematic contexts in which animals are reared and slaughtered. Firstly, there are the abhorrent welfare standards within industrialized livestock agriculture that kill billions of birds, pigs, cows, and others every year for human consumption. The methods of industrialized animal agriculture that reduce animal bodies to resources for consumption in a manner that maximizes efficiency and profit at the cost of well-being are widely known at this point.[8] Animals in such settings are typically reared in conditions that restrict any sort of evolved needs for fulfillment—they live in cramped, dirty, often crowded, and therefore, dangerous conditions; are heavily restricted from participating in naturally inherited behaviors due to living outside of appropriate biosystems; are frequently mutilated for the sake of efficiency; are prevented from meaningful social relationships, and may be subject to culling insofar as they do not meet the specified needs of the industry they serve. Second, the wider impact of consuming animal bodies on Earth's ecosystems must also be acknowledged. The business of livestock agriculture accounts for a significant percentage of global

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[6] LS, 33.

[7] I agree with John Berkman that inconsistencies and confusion over the ontological value of creatures and how they are to be treated exist because Catholic social teaching "does not have one clearly consistent view on the moral treatment of non-human animals." J. Berkman, "From Theological Speciesism to a Theological Ethology: Where Catholic Moral Theology needs to God," *Journal of Moral Theology* 3, no. 2 (2014): 11–34, at 25. Catholicism desires to overcome anthropocentrism but does not yet know how to do so!

[8] See David Clough, *On Animals: Vol. II. Theological Ethics* (London: T & T Clark/ Continuum, 2018) for a theological exploration of the wide array of ways the non-human animal is consumed.

greenhouse-gas emissions.[9] According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations:

> Much of the estimated 35% of global greenhouse-gas emissions deriving from agriculture and land use comes from livestock production. Livestock production—including deforestation for grazing land and soy-feed production, soil carbon loss in grazing lands, the energy used in growing feed-grains and in processing and transporting grains and meat, nitrous oxide releases from the use of nitrogenous fertilisers, and gases from animal manure (especially methane) and enteric fermentation—accounts for about 18% of global greenhouse-gas emissions.[10]

This is a conservative estimate. Some argue that the actual impact of the animal agriculture industry accounts for around 51% of global greenhouse-gas emissions.[11]

The unnecessary degradation of animal life in industrialized agriculture along with its unreasonable contribution to global greenhouse-gas emissions clearly violate the moral directives against animal instrumentalization and ecological irresponsibility in *Laudato Sí* and broader Catholic social teachings. It is not necessary for human flourishing to practice agriculture in such cruel and destructive ways even if there are a plurality of contexts in which humans do necessarily rely on animal bodies as a means of survival. The "necessity" for industrialized farming exists only within the religious fervor of techno-capitalist logic wherein anything is permissible to achieve the end goal of free-market sovereignty that maximizes profit for the powerful.

The vulnerable have yet to see the realization of the myth that wealth and well-being flow down from the top. Far from creating a more just society, techno-capitalisms exacerbate exclusion and the gap between the powerful and vulnerable leading to apathetic moral numbness – "a globalization of indifference has developed. Almost without being aware of it,

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[9] See FAO, *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options* (Rome: FAO, 2006) at: http://www.fao.org/3/a0701e/a0701e00.htm (accessed February 11, 2020).

[10] A. McMichael, J. Powles, C. Butler, R. Uauy, "Food, livestock production, energy, climate change, and health," *The Lancet* 370, no. 9594 (2007): 1253–1263, https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2807%2961256-2

[11] R. Goodland and J. Anhang, "Livestock and Climate Change: What if the key actors in climate change were pigs, chickens and cows?," *World Watch Magazine*, 22, no.6 (Nov–Dec 2009): 10–19 at: http://www.worldwatch.org/files/pdf/Livestock%20and%20Climate%20Change.pdf (accessed February 11, 2020).

we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own."[12] While the focus here is human vulnerability, all creatures suffer from unrestrained free-market ideologies, which "devour everything which stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which become the only rule."[13] The solution, Francis insists, is

> to reject a magical conception of the market, which would suggest that problems can be solved simply by an increase in the profits of companies or individuals. […]. Where profits alone count, there can be no thinking about the rhythms of nature, its phases of decay and regeneration, or the complexity of ecosystems which may be gravely upset by human intervention.[14]

Francis' concern for creaturely exploitation covers "the fur of endangered species" as well as "the desertification of the land, the harm done to biodiversity or the increased pollution," but little is said concerning the harm done in industrialized agricultural.[15] Considering that industrialized livestock agriculture is arguably the grossest anthropogenic abuse of nonhuman animal dignity on the planet and one of the leading contributors to Earth's current climate change, it is disconcerting that it is absent in Francis' thought. *Laudato Sí* nowhere discusses the massive suffering of animals farmed for meat, dairy, and eggs, nor does it address ecological issues arising from these systems, which disproportionally affects the global poor.[16] Francis comes closest to a serious discussion of industrialized agriculture in paragraph 129: "There is a great variety of small-scale food production systems which feed the greater part of the world's peoples, using a modest amount of land and producing less waste, be it in small agricultural parcels, in orchards and gardens, hunting and wild harvesting or local fishing."[17] In spite of a lament for bio-regional economies of scale undermined by "regional and global markets, or because the infrastructure for sales and transport is geared to larger businesses," there is no

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[12] EG, 54. See also LS, 56.
[13] EG, 56.
[14] LS, 190.
[15] LS, 123, 195.
[16] LS, 4, 20–31.
[17] LS, 29.

mention of industrialized livestock agriculture, its disruption of Earth's ecosystems, or its violence toward creatures who are supposedly "the object of the Father's tenderness."[18]

The Virtue of Eating Well

Catholic ethics must grapple with the question of eating well if it wishes to take responsibility for creatures and creation. While there are limitations to the ethic I explore here, I suggest that Catholic thought is best suited in developing a virtue of ascetic fasting, aimed at cultivating compassion through decreasing consumption—a willingness to sacrifice animal sacrifice. This perspective embraces Francis' insistence that our "awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits."[19] Developing a renewed food ethos rooted in a re-imagining of classical categories of virtue ethics represents one way to resist and perhaps revolutionize violent techno-capitalist economies that are annihilating animal well-being and Earth's ecosystems.

To follow what Timothy Harvie and I have suggested elsewhere, such fasting could be described as "degree vegetarianism," in recognition that there is a plurality of degrees to which we can realistically expect people to embrace a plant-focused diet.[20] Any ethos aimed at lowering animal consumption is necessarily a non-absolute virtue and must be negotiated by individuals and communities. Limitations aside, considering the violence of industrialized animal farming and the appetites of techno-capitalism, there is ground for all to resist the most insidious practices of our food cultures. As such, to the degree that they are able, Roman Catholics and all people of goodwill ought to fast from eating animal bodies and begin to mortify their desire to consume animal bodies.

Through much of patristic and medieval Church history and current Orthodox praxis,[21] fasting was an integral habit of the moral life. While I am not suggesting a simple return to such ancient practices—indeed I am re-imagining fasting with a plainly different rational than its historical precedent—abstaining from consuming animals has a deep history in

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[18] LS, 77.

[19] LS, 209.

[20] M. Eaton and T. Harvie, "*Laudato Sí* and Animal Well-Being-Food Ethics in a Throwaway Culture," *Journal of Catholic Social Ethics* (Forthcoming, Summer 2020). Such limits include geographical, economic, and physiological restrictions.

[21] Fasting days in the Orthodox Church count together for more than 60% of the year.

Christianity.[22] Fasting, for those who did not abstain from animals out of concern to transcend corporeity, was meant to elevate the spirit without rejecting the material world, shifting one's focus from earthly to heavenly concerns by not abusing bodily desire. "Catholics," Augustine explains, "in order to subdue the body that the soul may be more humbled in prayer, abstain not only from animal food, but also from some vegetable productions, without […] believing them to be unclean."[23] Thus, while Augustine rejects the ideas of Manicheanism, which held that "matter is evil, [and that] all flesh derives from the realm of darkness," he was not unconcerned with controlling carnal desire.[24] His concern was to avoid becoming ensnared in the abusive excess of carnal passion, with particular concern for the trappings of gluttony.

My concern is not for Augustine's desire to mortify one's desire in order to focus on the spiritual, nor the Manichean aspiration to transcend materiality. My desire is to dignify creatures through sacrificing animal sacrifice, manifest in disciplining my own lust for flesh. Thus, while "the goal [of historic fasting] was never to spare animal lives or to alleviate nonhuman suffering," there is value in retaining the structure of ascetic fasting while re-imagining the rationale for self-control; there is wisdom in the idea of mortifying certain embodied desires for the sake of justice.[25] Such wisdom lies not in a desire to punish the body in the service of value dualisms, but in controlling the violent delights that devour others. Lust for meat is seen in this light insofar as it is often compared to sexual lust, both of which might be resisted not for any problem with the desire as such, but for the violence inherent in objectifying another. We might, then, consider what Carol Adams has called "the sexual politics of meat" in linking a lust for meat with a lust for the sexual objectification, both of which devour others.[26] Thus, we mortify desire not out of a prioritization of spirit over body, but out of a respect for the dignity of alterity.

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[22] On the development of vegetarianism, see C. Frayne, "On Imitating the Regimen of Immortality or Facing the Diet of Mortal Reality: A Brief History of Abstinence from Flesh-Eating in Christianity," *Journal of Animal Ethics* 6, no. 2 (2016): 188–212; Colin Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast: A History of Vegetarianism* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1996).

[23] Augustine, *Contra Faustum*, 30, 5.

[24] Spencer, *Heretic's Feast*, 144. See also Augustine, *De Haeresibus*, 46; *Ad inquisitions Januarii*, 20.

[25] Frayne, "Imitating," 199.

[26] Carol Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

This fits the spirit of *Laudato Sí*, in spite of its ambiguous concern for animal well-being. The heart of Francis' revolution of tenderness insists that animal bodies are not simply "potential 'resources' to be exploited," and pushes us to question our indifference consuming the more-than-human. As such, in critical dialogue with tradition, the structure of fasting could be re-imagined and re-integrated into the moral life with a renewed ground in not only prudence and temperance but also a desire for justice rooted in the dignity of animals, who caused St. Francis to "burst into song" and "care for all that exists."[27] A vegetarian ethic and ethos that intentionally fasts from consuming animals to some degree would thus be a meaningful development for life within the trajectory and spirit of Catholic social teaching. Rooted in both historical practice and contemporary developments in our understanding of animal well-being and the economic systems responsible for destroying ecosystems, fasting from animals affords humans some concrete power in resisting and revolutionizing irresponsible systems of consumption.

How these fasts are practiced must be carefully developed by individuals or communities as appropriate for their experience. Some might consider re-integrating historic, seasonal, or temporally oriented fasts modeled on the church calendar or some other system. Lent, Advent, Wednesdays, and Fridays were once, of course, common vegetarian periods of ascetic discipline.[28] Others might abstain from consuming animals for set, disciplined periods of time, from single meals, days, weeks, months, or longer. Beyond fasts of time, others might abstain from certain animal bodies altogether based on greater and lesser degrees of violence perpetrated in the rearing and slaughter of the type of animal. One might eschew beef due to its absurd ecological footprint, another might abstain from eggs because of the mass culling of male chicks. Beyond these, others might practice fasts of industry, rejecting intensified, industrialized meat in favor of local, small scale livestock farmers, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's), or hunting. If one insisted on consuming animals, these would be better sources insofar as the consumer has the freedom or economic power to access less harmful modes of farming. However vegetarian fasts are practiced, each would share a common moral ground in concern for the more-than-human and a willingness to resist economic systems that reduce creatures and creation to mere resources for consumption and

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[27] LS, 11.
[28] Frayne, "Imitating," 195; Spencer, *Heretic's Feast*, 177–179; 183–184.

objects to maximize capital for the powerful few at the expense of Earth's poor and vulnerable.

While this ethic needs development moving forward, its willingness to sacrifice animal sacrifices made to the divinity of rapacious techo-capitalist markets begins to push forward the spirit of *Laudato Sí* and the heart of Francis' revolutionary theology, which aims at radically changing the church. This willingness characterizes the tender compassion that competes against greed and violence for humanity's ultimate telos. Without such compassion, we place our own being and dignity, as well as the being and dignity of Earth and our more-than-human neighbors, at risk of annihilation.

CHAPTER 8

Noli Me Tángere: A Church for the Oppressed—Putting the Abused and Vulnerable at the Forefront of Ecclesial Activity and Change

Cristina Lledo Gomez

After decades of silence, across the globe, the voices of generations of people abused as children by Roman Catholic priests and religious are finally being formally recognized at the highest level, through Royal Commissions, grand jury investigations, and by Catholic institutions themselves.[1] While Catholic priests and religious are not the main

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[1] See, for example, Tom Jackman, Michelle Boorstein, and Julie Zauzmer, "The Pennsylvania report on clergy sex abuse spawned a wave of probes nationwide. Now what?", *Washington Post,* November 22, 2018, at https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/the-pennsylvania-report-on-clergy-sex-abuse-spawned-investigations-nationwide-now-what/2018/11/22/101dcce8-e467-11e8-8f5f-a55347f48762_story.html?utm_term=.8d7a3cb7777f (accessed February 15, 2020).

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perpetrators of child abuse (in fact, studies show perpetrators are often anyone well-known to the child, particularly family and family friends),[2] the Church's participation in abuse and/or cover-ups continues to be of high interest to the media and the public, especially in more recent times with the revelations of abuse of nuns by priests and bishops, which Pope Francis has admitted to be true.[3]

In response, the focus of churches has mainly been toward reparative and preventive strategies against the abuse of children. Yet this chapter suggests a broader and more effective approach, that is, an ecclesial focus not only denouncing sexual and physical violence but all forms of violence: psychological, emotional, financial, intellectual, and spiritual, in addition to sexual and physical. Moreover, churches can show real commitment to change by denouncing all forms of oppression, not only against violence but also other forms of oppression, inside and outside of themselves. According to Iris Marion Young's classic five faces of oppression (first published in 1990), the other main forms of oppression are exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism.[4] With these differing ways in which people can be abused, intentional care by the church could thus be extended beyond those abused by clergy and religious to all survivors of violence, at-risk persons, and those experiencing multiple forms of oppression.[5] Persons who fall into these categories could include children, domestic violence survivors, people from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, or Questioning (LGBTIQ+) community,

[2] "Offenders" in Clayton A. Hartjen and S. Priyadarsini, *The Global Victimization of Children: Problems and Solutions* (New York: Springer, 2012), 198–201. At https://ebook-central-proquest-com.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/lib/csuau/detail.action?docID=884379 (accessed February 15, 2020). See also, Darkness to Light nonprofit organization, *Child Sexual Abuse Statistics: Perpetrators*, at d2l.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Statistics_2_Perpetrators.pdf (accessed February 15, 2020).

[3] BBC News, *Pope admits clerical abuse of nuns including sexual slavery*, February 6, 2019 at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47134033 (accessed February 15, 2020).

[4] Iris Marion Young, "The Five Face of Oppression" in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 39–65.

[5] For a definition of adults at risk, see for example Australian Law Reform Commission, *§14.3 Safeguarding Adults at Risk,* at https://www.alrc.gov.au/publications/risk-adults (accessed February 15, 2020). For a list of indicators of adult abuse, see, for example, Social Care Institute for Excellence, *Protecting Adults at Risk: Good Practice Guide* (2012), at https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/adultsafeguardinglondon/files/sections/recognition-and-indicators-of-adult-abuse.pdf (accessed February 15, 2020).

Aboriginal persons, and migrants.[6] For the reality in many communities is that there exists a proportion either currently experiencing abuse, or are vulnerable to abuse, or have experienced abuse and/or oppression and are living with its after-effects.[7] More significantly, oppression is often experienced intersectionally—and this can be a forgotten aspect of the experience of the oppressed. That is, people can be dealing with domestic violence, for example, at the same time as dealing with marginalization, isolation, and discrimination, living in a rural community as migrants in new countries.[8]

Given the prevalence of violence and oppression, and their types, across a range of cultures and continents, real Church reforms will need to consider best practices that empower the oppressed or at-risk persons, to enable them to recognize and resist abuse and oppression. This brief chapter will offer two examples of the effects of oppression upon persons and ways in which churches can already play a role in response to their needs. By responding to the needs of the oppressed, churches become

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[6] See ANROWS, Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Australia (AIHW), *Impacts of Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence,* 2019, at https://d2rn9gno7zhxqg.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/05032315/Impacts-of-FDSV-2019-AIHW-update.pdf (accessed February 15, 2020).

[7] As a base statistic, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) September 2016 report, at least one in four adults were physically abused as children. At https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/child/en/ (accessed February 15, 2020). The WHO also estimates that globally, "1 in 3 (35%) women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime." (November 2017) At https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women (accessed February 15, 2020). In regard to experiences of exploitation, marginalization, racism, and the effects of colonialism: the WHO estimates 21 million people are victims of forced labor (http://who.int (accessed February 15, 2020)) and this includes people in first world countries. UNDP estimates one in three people worldwide continue to live in low levels of human development (https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2017/03/21/world-s-most-marginalized-still-left-behind.html (accessed February 15, 2020).). In Australia, 46% of indigenous respondents to a 2016 survey said they experienced racism (https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/89b96698-1f50-449c-9260-7c0243b109be/aihw-australias-welfare-2017-chapter7-2.pdf.aspx (accessed February 15, 2020)) and there is much research on the colonial mentality experienced by Filipinos as will be shown later in this chapter.

[8] See, for example, the Jesuit Refugee Australia 2018 Report on *Free from Violence Against Women and Girls,* showing new migrants experiencing both the issues of settling in a new land and domestic violence, at https://www.jrs.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Free-from-Violence-Against-Women-and-Girls-VAWG-Report-8.pdf (accessed February 15, 2020).

transformed from museums with closed doors into real places of welcome where the principle of "preferential option for the poor" is evidenced concretely. This is the desire of Pope Francis as well as the desire of many Catholics from across the world who are tired of seeing irrelevant, condemnatory, closed, and divisive churches.[9]

In this light, I begin with a picture of the experience of adult sexual abuse survivors who experience complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD), a common consequence of surviving childhood sexual abuse. Because of CPTSD, a survivor becomes vulnerable to further violence. Here, communities have an opportunity to help survivors but also have an opportunity to transform themselves. I then explore the experience of migrants who carry colonial mentality (CM), affecting their ability to resist violence because of internalized oppression (IO). Again, this presents an opportunity for churches to be agents of change, enabling migrants to learn about their dignity and self-respect, in turn empowering them to resist further oppression inside and outside of their churches, ultimately resulting too in the transformation of their churches and society. I conclude with a call to a particular change and resistance within the church exemplified in the powerful phrase used for the title of this chapter: "*Noli Me Tangere*." The phrase has highly significant connotations for both the abused and oppressed and can be used not only as their catchcry but also as the catchcry for a church in great need of reform from the violence and oppression that continues to exist within its walls.

CPTSD in Survivors, and an Opportunity for Faith Communities

The World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases eleventh version manual (ICD-11), published in 2018, added CPTSD to its list of mental, behavioral, or neurodevelopmental disorders specifically associated with stress.[10] The ICD-11 states the symptoms of CPTSD include the symptoms of core PTSD as well as:

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9 Pope Francis, *General Audience*, September 9, 2015, at http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150909_udienza-generale.html (accessed February 15, 2020).

10 World Health Organization, 6B41 "Complex post-traumatic stress disorder," in *ICD-11*, at https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en#/http%3a%2f%2fid.who.int%2ficd%2fentity%2f585833559 (accessed February 15, 2020).

1. severe and pervasive problems in affect regulation;
2. persistent beliefs about oneself as diminished, defeated, or worthless, accompanied by deep and pervasive feelings of shame, guilt, or failure related to the traumatic event; and
3. persistent difficulties in sustaining relationships and in feeling close to others. The disturbance causes significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.[11]

Of possible interest to churches in regard to CPTSD is the consequent negative self-concept survivors carry alongside their experience of disturbance in their interpersonal functioning. Because of these effects, survivors have difficulties distinguishing boundaries and limits in relationships and can become vulnerable to ongoing abuse. On the other end of the scale, survivors can have difficulties with intimacy and trust, therefore, creating difficulties within relationships, in part because they cannot believe they are deserving of sustained loving relationships. In theological terms, overall, these behaviors present as hatred of the self, rejection of others, and ultimately a rejection of God, or in the least, a rejection of the power of God's love to overcome self-hate.

For the communities of the abused an opportunity opens up to walk with the abused and downtrodden. While a survivor cannot understand what it feels like or looks like to be in a healthy relationship with good boundaries, communities can find ways to provide community for the abused which are far away from their place of abuse and are instead places of safety and assurance where loving interactions can occur. In her foundational studies on the role of grace and faith communities in connection to the traumatized, Jennifer Beste called for "an adequate understanding of human receptivity and responsiveness to God's grace" which involves the community and interpersonal relationships and their central role in the

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[11] Ibid. See also image comparing CPTSD to PTSD in "Complex Post-traumatic Stress Disorder" in *Trauma and Dissociative Disorders Explained*. At http://traumadissociation. com/complexptsd (accessed February 15, 2020). For more detail, cf. Marylène Cloitre, Donn W. Garvert, Chris R. Brewin, Richard A. Bryant & Andreas Maercker, "Evidence for proposed ICD-11 PTSD and complex PTSD: a latent profile analysis," *European Journal of Psychotraumatology* 4 (2013). doi: https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v4i0.20706

mediation of God's grace.[12] Beste insisted the need for a revision of a theology of grace in light of abuse survivors which took into consideration:

1. the practical realization that persons can severely debilitate and also foster each other's capacity to respond to God's grace; and
2. the theological conviction that a primary way in which God mediates grace is through interpersonal loving interactions.[13]

By making such considerations in the revision of a theology of grace, Beste says "our sense of responsibility for one another" heightens and they help us to "discern how to love in ways that foster each other's ability to respond positively to God and others."[14] In other words, the communities can be a place of grace where the abused learn to truly receive and give love. But more than that, they become places where joys and sorrows are shared as one body of Christ. As *Lumen Gentium (LG),* the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church says:

> Giving the body unity through Himself and through His power and inner joining of the members, this same Spirit produces and urges love among the believers. From all this it follows that if one member endures anything, all the members co-endure it, and if one member is honored, all the members together rejoice. (LG 7)[15]

Constant exposure to a loving environment where a survivor learns to listen to his or her voice and receives continuous messages of safety, assurance, and unconditional love, even when he or she significantly differs in opinion and feeling to other persons within the community communicates the God of unconditional love Godself. Through this repeated communal experience, it is possible over time to accept this divine unconditional love.

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[12] Jennifer Beste, "Receiving and Responding to God's Grace: A Re-Examination in Light of Trauma Theory," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no.1 (2003): 3–20.

[13] Beste, "Receiving and Responding to God's Grace," 18.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Pope Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium,* Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, November 21, 1964, at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (accessed February 15, 2020). See also 1 Cor 12:26.

Colonial Mentality and a Role for Churches

Colonial mentality is described as "a product of colonialism […] a broad multidimensional construct that refers to personal feelings or beliefs of ethnic or cultural inferiority."[16] It can manifest in the following ways:

1. denigration of the self,
2. denigration of the culture or body,
3. discriminating against less Americanized in-group members, and
4. tolerating historical and contemporary oppression.[17]

It is believed the effects of this form of internalized oppression "range from admiration of the colonial legacy and culture to feelings of shame and embarrassment about the indigenous culture,"[18] and it is "associated with bullying, acculturative stress and maladaptive behaviours."[19] Internalized colonialism weakens not only individual self-identity but also collective self-esteem.

For Filipinos, Colonial Mentality is an especially pointed issue. A Filipino who carries the colonial mentality can express any of the following manifestations:

(a) denigration of the Filipino self (that is, feelings of inferiority, shame, embarrassment, resentment, or self-hate about being Filipino);
(b) denigration of the Filipino culture or body (that is, the perception that anything Filipino is inferior to anything White, European, or American, including culture, language, physical characteristics, material products, and government);
(c) discriminating against less-Americanized Filipinos (that is, distancing oneself from characteristics related to being Filipino and becoming as American as possible); and

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[16] E. J. R. David and S. Okazaki, "The Colonial Mentality Scale (CMS) for Filipino Americans: Scale construction and psychological implications," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 53, (2006): 241–252, cited in Shawn O. Utsey, Jasmine A. Abrams, Annabella Opare-Henaku, Mark A. Bolden, Otis Williams III, "Assessing the Psychological Consequences of Internalized Colonialism on the Psychological Well-Being of Young Adults in Ghana," *Journal of Black Psychology* 41 (2015): 195–220, at 198.

[17] Ibid., 198.
[18] Ibid., 199.
[19] Ibid., 198.

(d) tolerating historical and contemporary oppression of Filipinos and Filipino Americans (i.e., the acceptance of oppression as an appropriate cost of civilization, believing maltreatment is well-intentioned).[20]

It seems obvious here that a simple way churches can resist the reinforcement of colonial mentality and fight against the insidiousness of internalized oppression is by introducing and normalizing diversity within their communities, through symbol, language, ritual, and representation. Over two decades ago, the Pontifical Council for Culture said itself that the revelation of God is inseparable from the culture of its audience:

> The message of the Revelation, inscribed in the sacred History, always presents itself in the guise of a cultural package from which it is inseparable, and of which it is an integral part. The Bible, the Word of God expressed in the words of men [and women], constitutes the archetype of the fruitful encounter between the Word of God and culture.[21]

When Asians, Africans, Polynesians, and South American members of predominantly white congregations, for example, hear, see, sing, kneel, stand, pray, and respond to a white male God in liturgies, what is reinforced in themselves? The voice of their white colonizers or the true God revealed in Jesus? Is this God more superior with his white image against their dark or olive skins? Is He more superior in His white ways of behavior and comportment against their own diverse ways of being and interaction?

A simple act that could be reintroduced in liturgies to affirm non-white cultures is to mix the use of English songs with songs from various cultural backgrounds, depending on the demographics of the congregation. Another simple act is to present images of Mary, Jesus, and the Saints in prayer spaces, as not necessarily again white-European in appearance. But

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[20] Victor E. Tuazon. Edith Gonzalez, Daniel Gutirrez, and Lotes Nelson, "Colonial Mentality and Mental Health Help-Seeking of Filipino Americans," *Journal of Counselling and Development* 97 (October 2019): 352–363, here 355. See also E.J.R. David and Dinghy Kristine B. Sharma, "Losing Kapwa: Colonial Legacies and the Filipino American Family," *Asian American Journal of Psychology* 8 (2017): 43–55; and Elizabeth Protacio Marcelino, "Towards Understanding the psychology of the Filipino," *Women & Therapy* 9 (Oct 2008): 105–128.

[21] Pontifical Council for Culture, *Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture,* May 23, 1999, at   http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_pc-cultr_doc_03061999_pastoral_en.html

more than the statues and songs, and other culturally distinguishing décor, churches need to engage in ongoing dialogue and the building of relationships among their people of diverse backgrounds. Many churches already celebrate multiculturalism by holding annual multicultural days filled with dance, décor, food, song, and prayer, especially on World Day of Migrants and Refugees, celebrated on the last Sunday of September.[22] But to take other cultures seriously, churches must go beyond this surface level and grapple with both cultural disagreements and differences as well as commonalities. This could only be achieved through the building of relationships over time and getting to know one another's strengths, characteristics, quirks, and limitations. If the church is meant to be a witness of God's kingdom, a sign, and instrument (LG1), then it must resist the colonial imperialism which exists unquestioningly in its midst. Only when the voices of the oppressed feel they have moved from the margins to the center that churches can truly say they have transformed into communities that take seriously the Catholic vision and mandate of the "preferential option for the poor," exemplified by the classic passage in Matthew 25:35–40: "When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink […]."

Conclusion

Noli me tángere is a phrase that can have much significance for the abused and oppressed within churches. For Filipinos, who carry a colonial mentality as a result of being colonized by Spaniards, Americans, and the Japanese, it is the title of a book written by their national hero, José Rizal, in response to their Spanish colonizers.[23] *Noli me tángere* was also the name given by the Filipinos to a type of cancer of the eyelids at the time. For Rizal, who was an ophthalmologist himself, the description fitted perfectly as a title for his book proposing to explore the "cancers" of Filipino society which other Filipinos would not touch—namely the consequence of Spanish colonization which included Spanish friars raping Filipino women and fathering *mestizo/mestiza* (half-white) children. The book served to create

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[22] See   https://migrants-refugees.va/resource-center/world-day-of-migrants-refugees-2019/ as an example.
[23] Jose Rizal and Leon Ma Guerrero, *Noli me tángere (=Touch me not)* (Mineola, New York: 2019). First published in Spanish in 1887 in the Philippines.

a national identity and consciousness for Filipinos, indirectly contributing to the overthrow of their Spanish oppressors.

For the abused, the phrase has great meaning in its bluntness and directness in instruction—"Do not touch me." It has allusions to the resistance against the abuse of clergy when connected to the novel of the same title. It shows agency on the part of the survivor who says: "No more, I will no longer allow you or anyone to abuse me even with your power."

For a Christian believer, the phrase has significance too for its reminder to resist the distorted form of Christianity, a colonial white imperialism type which was used by Christian missionaries onto indigenous peoples of discovered lands. It also refers to the scene when Mary, the Apostle to the Apostles, sees the risen Jesus and seeks to cling onto him, at which Jesus responds: "Do not touch me for I have not yet risen to the Father" (John 20:17). Jesus tells Mary to no longer cling onto the earthly Jesus because Jesus now calls Mary into a new relationship with him as the risen Christ.

Noli me tángere can thus speak on multiple levels to Christian communities—to resist the "cancers" of its culture and systems; to cling onto transformation, as exemplified in the risen Jesus rather than clinging onto dead systems which once served their purposes but are in desperate need of reform for current contexts; and to cling onto the risen Jesus himself who transforms the cancers of church and society, if believers are willing to cooperate with the transformation.

The Essence of Faith: Prayer as Ritual and Struggle

Mary McClintock Fulkerson

If we were to define prayer, there would probably be a lot of versions. Of course, the first example of prayer that might come to mind would be "The Lord's Prayer," a prayer attributed to Jesus. But Jesus did not offer a definition, just what became a classic example. A rather brief account of prayer and one with deep potential comes from Greg Scheer, who attributes this definition to his pastor: prayer is "the essence of our faith in ritual form."[1] This is to say that Christian faith, the redemptive experience that signifies human beings' connection to God, is lived out in many ways, but definitely through praying.

Prayer has been seen as relational—a fundamental connecting with God—throughout history. Johann Arndt, an evangelical mystic, says "without prayer we cannot find God; prayer is the means by which we seek and find Him." Nineteenth-century theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher wrote: "To be religious and to pray–that is really one and the same thing."

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[1] These historic quotes are all from Greg Sheer, *Essential Worship: A Handbook for Leaders* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2016) p. 24.

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As one contemporary scholar puts it, "there can be no doubt at all that prayer is the heart and centre of all religion."[2]

Of course, prayer is not the only form of lived faith, so it helps to also categorize it with the genre of "ritual,"[3] as Sheer points out, namely, in religious practices that are repeated. To be a "*ritual* form" of the "essence of our faith" means that prayer is a *repeated* way to experience and display faith. Thus prayer is not a random, made-up practice, but a somewhat regularized one insofar as its origin and telos is the God of faith. While the centrality of prayer in human life is clear in all these definitions, the potential for diversity is implicit in the definitions, as well. This essay will explore an unusual site of prayer, a homeless shelter, to recognize realities of faith that might help change the church.

These definitions of prayer suggest that there is an importance to prayer that may not always be recognized. To get at its importance, let us first consider some of its limits. Prayer can be significant, as we will discuss, but it can also be limiting. When ritual prayer occurs in church, it can sometimes feel like repetition, as everyone is expected to repeat "The Lord's Prayer" at a particular time in the service, and to be quiet during a number of events, and to sing the correct hymns at the proper time. The feeling may simply be the need to say prayers "correctly" and keep up with the voices of the rest of the congregation. The dominance of "traditional" forms of worship may well restrict openness to new modes of experiencing and communicating faith. The continued use of the image of God as "Father" in the Lord's Prayer, for example, can be problematic for some because of its potential to reaffirm patriarchal religion. Sometimes required, repetitive performances may have little to do with experiencing some deep and disclosive *new insights* into God's contemporary presence, sometimes mediated by new images for God.[4]

Given the limitations of some of the practices of prayer in standard worship, its intended significance is seen when we recognize, as indicated,

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[2] Friedrich Heiler offers a fascinating account of the many versions of "Prayer as the Central Phenomenon of Religion," as his Introduction puts it. Friedrich Heiler, *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion* (1932) Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1997, xiii–xxviii, xv.

[3] Ritual is "a formal ceremony or series of acts that is always performed in the same way." Online Definition of Ritual by Merriam-Webster.

[4] The obvious alternative would be God as Mother.

that prayer is to enact connection with God. So let us think of some crucial features of that connecting that open up the possibility of honoring human diversity and change: prayer as a ritual, prayer as communal, and prayer as honest revelation of needs, fears, and gratefulness. To explore an example of prayer that fits these features, we will look at what would appear to be a non-traditional setting for assessing the Christian practice of prayer, namely, the Durham Homeless Shelter in Durham, North Carolina.

A Shelter is a place where people without homes in Durham, a medium-sized city in the southeast, can find a place to sleep and get meals, among other services. The regular prayer event at the Durham Shelter happens three times a week—Monday, Wednesday, and Friday—and begins a little after 9:00 am. It is comprised of a gathering of people from the Shelter, from off the streets, some who have homes but come to the Shelter for meals, and folks from other places, as well. In a room where folks sit around several connected tables so that everyone can be face-to-face, Shelter Chaplain Rev. Susan Dunlap, a white Presbyterian clergywoman from the community, sits at the front of the tables to lead the event. In front of her are two candles which she lights to begin the prayer service. She places the lit candles in a large bowl filled with sand where more candles will be inserted; extra candles lie in a bowl nearby that can be lit for each additional prayer offered by participants.

Delivering her usual welcome to all, the Chaplain is about to follow-up with her opening prayer when another man comes in the room to join the gathering of folks around the tables. A very thin man in shorts, an undershirt, reddish skin, and several missing front teeth, he lays down on the floor in the center between all the tables. While this is not the typical way people come to join the gathering, Chaplain Dunlap welcomes him and tells him that we are beginning with an opening prayer which will be followed up by asking folks to share their prayer concerns. She then asks him what his name is and whether he would be willing to lead us in the prayers. He responds, "I am David," and agrees to begin the prayer gathering. While remaining down on the floor, David then says that we have to pray for other people or God won't bless us. Folks agree and we all proceed.

This story would seem to contradict the first criterion for prayer, at least in the sense that it appears to be a disruption of *ritual*, defined as "a

formal ceremony or series of acts that is always performed in the same way."[5] That would likely be true in very different kinds of worship services, that is, those in typical middle and upper-class churches where such behavior would *not* be allowed. However, in this place, the prayer service simply goes on—giving the ostensible disruptor the power to enhance the praying.

The first feature of what counts as prayer, as noted, is its performance as a ritual. And while the ritualization happening at the Shelter can certainly be a bit different from typical middle and upper-class church rituals, it still fits the definition of ritual, that is, the "ceremony or series of acts that is always performed in the same way." What some outsiders to the Shelter would see as problematically disruptive, for the insiders the so-called "disruptive" behavior of David was not a sign of this *not* being a ritual. Indeed, no one seemed bothered. He was participating in a creative form of ritual behavior in this homeless setting by lying on the floor, thus his participation was not a passive sitting around the table or in the pews.

The second feature of prayer is its communal character, and while there are endless prayers spoken or imagined in life by individuals alone, the sharing of prayers in groups—whether officially church or some other form of community—offers opportunities to share with others one's concerns, fears, worries, as well as joys and celebrations, the third defining feature of prayer. And sharing with other human beings can be a real opportunity to gain and give support. Thus the communal character of this form of prayer is crucial to its character. In such a community as this small group, some are homeless, some have places to live but get their meals at the Shelter, and some are just outsiders who regularly come for the prayers. Such tellings are hopefully a helpful way to learn more about one another and sometimes share advice and wisdom in response to others' concerns. Frequently, someone has gotten advice, however brief, for a concern, such as who might give them help in the Shelter or where might be a good place to go to church. *Group* gatherings are not automatic fixers of anything, but can hopefully help humanize the faith relation to God.

Thirdly, prayer can be understood as an honest revelation of needs, fears, and gratefulness. While such revelations may in fact be implicit in the other two defining features of prayer, it is important to communicate in

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[5] Online Definition of Ritual by Merriam-Webster.

such prayer services that they are safe places where these realities can be and should be revealed. As indicated in the feature of "communal," such sharing is supposed to happen. However, to call this "honest revelation" of needs, fears, and gratefulness, implicitly suggests that people do not always feel safe to tell the truth about what is happening in their lives that makes them fearful. Indeed, unless they are desperate, some may be afraid to share all of their needs. The Shelter is, at best, a place for such sharing. Honest revelation, thus, contributes to a form of prayer that reveals the real hurt, the damage, as well as occasional gratefulness shaping persons' lives.

Pastor Dunlap urges and supports participants to share their current stories. This is in some contrast to regular church services, some of which regularly have a rather short time when members are invited to "share prayer concerns" by standing up in the service. However, those church service sharings are not typically comparable with the depth, length, and ostensible "desperation" of the Shelter sharings.[6]

There is a multitude of different experiences that have shaped the lives of the participants who come to the Shelter's prayer gatherings, but they certainly have all experienced various forms of deep loss, poverty, and physical insecurity. While there is no "fix" in the room, it is not insignificant that individuals engage in a form of agency as they sometimes come to the front of the room to lift and light a candle and share their own prayer concerns or simply share from where they are sitting. Sometimes it will be a concern about the larger world, such as the activity of the current U.S. president, but much of the time it is about a personal dilemma, such as the need for a job, access to family, or housing, and the strength to "stay clean." Jim, a leading African American from outside, speaks alongside Susan to express his own concerns and the larger concerns of the society.

So Shelter gathering as a ritual begins with Chaplain Dunlap calling everyone to gather and sit around the table. Then we go around the room for people to share their identities, which is followed by an opening prayer by the Chaplain, and a sharing of concerns. It is always allowable when people walk in late and interrupt the ritual in some way. After that sharing, which goes on for typically 30 minutes, the group gathers in a circle to hold hands and the Chaplain offers a closing prayer.

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[6] That is not to deny that middle and upper class church-goers experience horrendous things in their lives—tragedies and injustices.

While these happenings may not feel "ceremonial" or ritualistic to some people, they appear to create performative regular acts for people off the streets. As said, the so-called disruptive behavior of David is not a sign of the prayer gathering *not* being a ritual. He was engaged in a creative form of ritual behavior—not in the sense of a passive sitting at the table or in the pews, but by participating in two other features of prayer as well, namely *communion*, lying down in the middle of the group to get everyone's attention, and a *sharing of his concerns* with everybody. What some outsiders to the Shelter would see as problematic, for the insiders the ostensibly "disruptive" behavior of David appeared to bother no one.

Indeed, while there is no intention to romanticize the Shelter's prayer participants, there are contrasts that might illustrate some value enhancement that is provided by the prayer gathering. A first contrast is between prayer as a private silent or spoken request to God occasionally and prayer at the Shelter as a spoken concern and request to God that is heard and shared by a room full of people sort of like you three times a week. A second contrast is between life lived with occasional church gatherings at worship creating friendly social relationships and life lived as a struggling, sometimes desperate individual seeking out and sometimes finding some form of support—a group of people that might be considered "community."

Refusal to romanticize homeless people suggests that competition with and/or fear of other persons does exist in the Shelter. One would expect this when humans experience desperation and struggle to survive. These are most likely strongly contrasting experiences with those of the typical folks who worship at middle and upper-class churches. For those who come to the Shelter prayer gatherings, it is hoped that such attitudes are countered by experiences that may well-humanize the other through hearing of their tragic and awful experiences and sometimes sensing their empathy and potential collegiality.

So contrasts and similarities between prayer as practiced in the Shelter and what has been a generalized account of middle and upper-class church practices does suggest a new way to think about the Shelter event. This is to recognize the crucial role of prayer as a ritual, prayer as communal, and prayer as an honest revelation of needs, fears, and gratefulness for persons in situations of struggle.

So what, then, is useful from the comparison of these two kinds of prayer situations? A first observation might be that homeless folks could learn from middle and upper-class church practices that go longer than a half-hour. They would be exposed to more kinds of "ritual." As several of

them do, in fact, go to churches, there might be some value for the home-less folks to participate in a very different social faith world and learn more about Christian faith and doctrine through the extended prayers, liturgy, and sermons in these churches. An obvious benefit for them might also be opportunities to connect with communities with more resources and potential information about opportunities for jobs or paid labor.

What might be useful for middle and upper-class persons of faith to participate in the Shelter prayer gatherings? To some degree, connecting to God is enhanced by more opportunities for prayer. But consider the three features of prayer: the first—liturgy—is likely not to be perceived as such in the Shelter event by folks who go to more "officially" sacred wor-ship services. While it has been argued that the Shelter prayer event *does* qualify as liturgy insofar as it constitutes a "ceremony or series of acts that is always performed in the same way," that is not likely to persuade typical church-goers, given what they usually experience. As for the second fea-ture—communal—the Shelter prayer event contributes in unique ways by bringing a small group of people together in a face-to-face situation that sometimes opens up significantly honest and moving forms of sharing. While they do not "belong" to the Shelter as a community the way Christians tend to "belong" to a church as their community, many of these folks are consistently there at the gatherings, and some may well form sup-portive relationships as a result.

The third feature of prayer, honest revelation of needs, fears, and grate-fulness, is clearly a primary feature of the Shelter prayer gathering. A test for honesty is not available, but that is the case in middle/upper-class churches as well. The needs and fears expressed in the Shelter are hard to disbelieve. Even the faking or exaggerating of these accounts would likely be the communicating of deep struggles of some sort; prayers are some-times for the very means of survival. Given that, the occasional revelation of gratefulness is a wonderful thing to hear. The crucial value of this third feature of prayer for persons from so-called regular churches is to hear personal stories face-to-face from "the poor"—from those that Jesus called "the least of these." Such exposure could hopefully have the effect of enhancing passion for humanity and social justice in a variety of ways.

In conclusion, the brief exploration of different contexts for ostensibly "regular" prayer practice has suggested that there are clear differences in the way prayer occurs. That, of course, is not a surprising observation at all. It also suggests the importance of what sometimes can be deeply dif-ferent functions for prayer. And while not explored in depth here, the

contrast between the experience and content of prayer for the privileged as more standard and "traditional," and the way in which prayer for those at the Shelter might be an act out of desperation—a plea for survival—is a revelatory reality. The possibility for more connection between different kinds of prayers and the people who share those prayers may seem to be a small thing, but it is in fact an important reality for churches to explore. Experiences of the homeless are, simply put, very different modes of living and communicating faith. Prayer is, after all, "lived faith," and exposure to different lives can open us all up to the deeply serious challenges of existence as well as the potential gifts of faith.

CHAPTER 10

The Holy Spirit Makes the Church: Changing the Church as a Responsive Act

Scott MacDougall

If it is true that church is *semper reformanda*, and surely it is beyond doubt that it is, then the fact that church is a form of Christian community that is always changing must be assumed as a given.[1] What may be more contentious, however, is identifying the agent to whom that change is due. For numerous reasons, change in churches, even when rightly understood as the result of historically contingent events and processes, has often been ascribed to human agency, either implicitly or explicitly. This has sometimes, for example, been on account of scriptural passages such as the Great Commission to go and "make disciples of all the nations" that

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[1] I refer to *church* and *churches* rather than *the church* in order to mark what I take to be an important theological distinction between *church* as a name for the analytical category denoting Christian community, *churches* as the set of actual particular forms of Christian communities that exist or have existed, and *the church*, which denotes an abstraction, a universal Christian body that has never existed. In addition, I do not follow the common convention of capitalizing this last concept of *church* because capitalizing it imbues that non-existent and idealized abstraction with an improper, often triumphalist, power that an eschatological outlook on Christian community, as outlined here, helps to correct.

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the Jesus of Matthew's gospel issues to his apostles (Matt. 28:19) or of the long and (to say the least) ambivalent history of Christian missions stemming from a deep-seated impulse to do precisely that. At other times, it has been fostered by a general tendency to seek ecclesial influence on the social, political, and economic structures of the societies where Christianity has flourished. In each case, talk of the Christian requirement to "build" or "grow" churches, rhetoric that is common at all ecclesial levels, reinforces an imagination of ecclesial change as driven by human action, even if the underlying theology might seek to avoid leaving that misimpression.

Certainly, human beings are actively involved in changing churches, and massively so. To the extent that churches exist precisely as collectivities of human beings, churches change only when and as the people who compose them undergo change of some kind. There is a real and important sense in which we have to say that Christian discipleship requires people to take responsibility for the work required to "build" churches and to demonstrate the wisdom and care needed to "grow" them. Nevertheless, uncareful language about ecclesial change and development featuring ideas that implicitly or explicitly reflect or give rise to an ecclesiological imagination with a starting point rooted in anthropology rather than in pneumatology claims more human causal agency in that sphere than is theologically warranted. People compose churches, but it is the Holy Spirit who makes them.[2] I argue in this brief essay that if, during the course of participating in processes of ecclesial change, we forget that it is ultimately God, not people, who builds, grows, and changes churches, we inappropriately replace divine agency with human agency, thereby profoundly misunderstanding the nature and character of Christian community, which, in turn, impairs the formation and practice of church.

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[2] Here and in the title, I am obviously playing on Henri de Lubac's famous dictum that "the eucharist makes the church," but I am also playing on Paul McPartlan's *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1993), for reasons that, I hope to show, Zizioulas himself might approve.

THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES THE CHURCH *AN ANTICIPATION OF ESCHATOLOGICAL PROMISE*

Church is a trinitarian reality,[3] being the body of Christ constituted pneumatically. Christian community's origin in the action of the Holy Spirit can be imagined in a number of ways. But the most salutary among them provide humanity, not with a causal or proprietary role but a responsive and receptive one. Willie James Jennings, for example, contends that church is "a community born of the Holy Spirit"[4] in an outpouring of divine power matched only by "the gracious work of God in creation" itself, the calling forth of a new reality at Pentecost in which "no one helped, no one assisted, everyone only tarried."[5] Similarly, Jürgen Moltmann holds that "church is the eschatological creation of the Spirit,"[6] in which Christians become a community held accountable to being the people of God, in service to humanity and the world, anticipating the divinely promised future of reconciliation.[7] John Zizioulas agrees, but on different grounds: for him, church comes into being as the Spirit gathers the many around the bishop, thereby constituting the one "corporate person"—Christ—the unified body that enacts the eucharistic liturgy by which the eschatological future enters and transforms the present into what all creation is destined to become.[8] Despite their important differences, in each of these instances, the Spirit is held to cause, call, constitute, and commission Christ's church and the human role is responsive. People do not build the church but assent to participate in the divine

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[3] See, among numerous possible examples, Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity & Christian Life* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991), 401–2, and Kathryn Tanner, *Jesus, Humanity and the Trinity: A Brief Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 83.

[4] Willie James Jennings, *Acts*, Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2017), 64.

[5] Jennings, *Acts*, 28.

[6] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 33.

[7] Moltmann, *Church*, 2.

[8] John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), esp. 110–14, 130–31; John D. Zizioulas, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World*, ed. Luke Ben Tallon (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 130–31; and John D. Zizioulas, "The Pneumatological Dimension of the Church," in *The One and the Many: Studies on God, Man, the Church, and the World Today*, ed. Gregory Edwards (Alhambra, CA: Sebastian, 2010), 75–90.

initiative that does. This is a distinction that, as will be seen, makes an important practical difference.

As the three theologians just mentioned each attest, the Holy Spirit, from whom churches receive their being, arrives as the presence of God's eschatological promise breaking into the present from the future. This is not a marginal understanding of the Holy Spirit but a central tenet of pneumatology,[9] and it demonstrates the critical importance of thinking ecclesiology and eschatology together within a pneumatological framework.[10] By doing so, we are able to perceive more clearly that church is brought into being by the Holy Spirit to be a community that anticipates by its corporate life and practices the eschatological future proclaimed, enacted, and sealed in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.[11] The vocation of Christian community is to imitate, extend, and manifest by words and actions (always imperfectly, this side of the *eschaton*) Jesus of Nazareth's proclamation and embodiment of, and invitation to, the ultimate fulfillment of perfect relational communion (*koinonia*) between humanity and God, among and within human beings, and between human beings and the rest of creation. Doing this is what makes it an anticipation of the *basileia tou Theou*, the kingdom or reign of God, the promised eschatological state of cosmic reconciliation in which God is finally All in all (1 Cor. 15:28).

What church never is, of course, is that *basileia* itself. It may be true that there is ancient precedent for praying "thy Spirit come" in place of "thy kingdom come," treating them as more or less synonymous petitions,[12] but neither of them can be heard as equivalent to praying "thy *church* come." Church is always and only a partial and sinful anticipation

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[9] See, for example, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Spirit and Salvation*, *A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), vol. 4, 59–60; Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources outside the Modern West* (Grand Rapids, MN: Eerdmans, 2005), esp. 204–7; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit—In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 81–84; and Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 143–47, 339–41.

[10] Wolfhart Pannenberg, for example, does this powerfully. See his *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), vol. 3, esp. Chapter 12, "The Outpouring of the Spirit, the Kingdom of God, and the Church."

[11] Scott MacDougall, *More Than Communion: Imagining an Eschatological Ecclesiology* (London: Bloomsbury–T&T Clark, 2015), 177–86.

[12] John P. Manoussakis, "The Anarchic Principle of Christian Eschatology in the Eucharistic Tradition of the Eastern Church," *Harvard Theological Review* 100 (2007): 36–37.

of the reality for which it stands.[13] This distinction bears directly upon the question at hand. As New Testament scholar Ben Witherington writes "It is one thing for believers to inherit/possess/enter the *basileia*; *it is another thing to be* the *basileia*, and this latter language is not used anywhere in the New Testament."[14] Wolfhart Pannenberg, a theologian for whom "anticipation" is a core ecclesiological concept, specifies further that church is not to be imagined as being the *basileia* in even an incomplete, partial, or preliminary sense.[15] As a provisional and anticipatory "institution of the interim" with no "eschatological ultimacy" of its own,[16] church points not toward itself but toward the eschatological promise revealed in Christ, the ultimate realization of which is the work of the same Holy Spirit who now moves into the present from that future precisely in order to constitute a proleptic and shadowy indication of the relational character of the *basileia* in the form of Christian community.[17] Church is a creature of the same life-giving power that moved across the face of the deep at creation's beginning and that will move as the power of the New Creation at its perfection. Church is no more changed, built, or grown by its members than is the ultimate state of cosmic reconciliation that it exists to proclaim.

Specifying the Human Role in the Eschatological–Ecclesial Work of the Holy Spirit

Yet, a theological imagination in which human effort is the causal agent of "building" or "growing" the "kingdom of God" is as prevalent as one that imagines the same where "building" and "growing" churches are concerned. Indeed, these tend to appear together. In both instances, however, the result is a negative impact on ecclesial practice. For example, the admirable efforts of those associated with the Social Gospel movement of the

[13] See, for example, Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 235.

[14] Ben Witherington, III, *Jesus, Paul, and the End of the World: A Comparative Study in New Testament Eschatology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 78; emphasis in original.

[15] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, 32.

[16] Christoph Schwöbel, "The Church as a Cultural Space," in *The End of the World and the Ends of God: Science and Theology on Eschatology*, ed. John Polkinghorne and Michael Welker (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 114.

[17] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 50–101.

early twentieth century were motivated by a version of postmillennialism that explicitly understood itself to be building the kingdom of God on Earth by construing the coming of that kingdom as being both inevitable and driven by human work and ingenuity, carried forward by a Hegelian unfolding of God's plan in the inexorable upward movement of technological and social "progress." When the barbarities of World War I and its aftermath destroyed this movement and the faith in human hands that enabled it,[18] the result was an attenuation of eschatological imagination that, despite some happy streams of recovery, largely persists and a widespread withdrawal of Christians from organized progressive social and political action until (at least in the USA) the Civil Rights Movement.

The mistake the Social Gospellers made was not connecting being Christian with serving the world's needs or understanding such service as Christian eschatological–ecclesial practice. The mistake was in thinking that they, not God, were responsible for building the *basileia*. When it became apparent to them that they were doing no such thing, many of them were bitterly disillusioned and gave up all together on maintaining a healthy theological hope in the future, on the one hand, and on organized social action as a manifestation of that hope, on the other.[19]

This, though, was unnecessary. Had those in the movement imagined their hope to be in God's promise rather than in their own efforts, had they understood their work to be responsive to and a participation in the prior movement of the Holy Spirit to manifest now something of the relational quality of reconciled and fully flourishing life to be perfected hereafter, and had they grasped that this does not happen as a process along a linear and unwavering upward trendline of "progress," the theological imagination of what they were doing might have been robust enough to allow them to keep doing it through and beyond the cataclysmic bloodbath of the Great War. Examples of such an imagination of Christian corporate life do exist. One need only think of how, say, Johann Baptist Metz[20] and William Stringfellow[21] passionately advocated for theologies

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[18] Gary Dorrien tells this story in magisterial and tragic detail in *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, & Modernity, 1900–1950* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003).

[19] Dorrien, *Making of American Liberal Theology*, 542.

[20] See especially Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 2007).

[21] Excellent primers to his work include *A Keeper of the Word: Selected Writings of William Stringfellow*, ed. Bill Wylie-Kellermann (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994) and *William Stringfellow: Essential Writings*, ed. Bill Wylie-Kellermann (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013).

along just these lines. At no point did either take human effort to be the decisive causal agent in building, growing, or even simply changing church or kingdom, though both understood well and articulated with sensitivity, faithfulness, and care the responsibility for Christian disciples to participate fully and actively in the divine project of achieving precisely the same ends that, say, Walter Rauschenbusch did.

Sketching a Practical Pneumatology of Ecclesial Change

Church is the communal shape of Christian witness to Jesus' resurrection,[22] and it is established, built, grown, and changed by the always-creative, life-giving, and liberative power of the Holy Spirit.[23] Acknowledging that it is not human beings but rather the Holy Spirit who, when speaking of and theologically imagining church properly, is the causal agent in ecclesial change in no way means that the set of activities one might have in mind when referring to efforts to "change the church" are inappropriate. Quite the opposite! By not allowing ourselves to erroneously imagine that transformations in church form or practice are *ultimately* due to our own initiative, even when they might be *proximately*, we are able to engage in those same transformational processes from a humble posture, a posture of responsiveness to the Holy Spirit's prior, effectively causal movement within the body, which allows us to engage in those very activities better, more effectively, and with greater resilience.

When we construe the processes of ecclesial change to be driven by the Holy Spirit who establishes and maintains Christian community, and our role in that process to be one of response to the Spirit's prior action and leading, we also throw off the self-imposed burden to "get church right," an anxiety that easily results in enforcing a "blueprint ecclesiology"[24] that unduly constrains churches rather than allowing them to make appropriate answer to their pneumatically given vocations in the time and place where

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[22] Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, 29–30.

[23] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992), see esp. Chaps. 4–11.

[24] See Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical–prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000) for a thorough detailing and critique of this phenomenon.

they are called into being as proleptic and provisional anticipations of the world's future.

Church is a creation of the Holy Spirit, who is the dynamism of the New Creation itself, arriving from the *basileia* not to confirm pre-established conceptions but instead seeking, in John Manoussakis' words, "the disarmament of our predictability, that is, our prejudice." He continues, "The [*eschaton*] is like the new wine that cannot be contained in the old wineskins. The old wineskins are none other than the concepts and categories of this world, the thinking process that we are used to and familiar with—let's call it our *perspective*." The "epiphanies" that subvert and transform that pre-existing perspective are moments, he writes, of "anticipation of God's kingdom."[25] In the ecclesial sphere, what this means is that anticipating the *basileia* under the power of the Holy Spirit might sometimes reveal that what we think we know is true about church is not actually so.

If this is how the Holy Spirit operates, and if church is a creature of the Holy Spirit, it becomes obvious that human beings can in no legitimate way be said to control or cause ecclesial change, and that the faithful way to imagine and practice our actual role in it is by maintaining and acting out of a responsive and receptive posture. Doing so requires a high degree of discernment, the patience, and skill required to maximize the chances of distinguishing rightly projection, wish-fulfillment, fear, or anxiety from true pneumatic openings, what Elizabeth Johnson calls the Holy Spirit's "igniting [of] what is unexpected, interruptive, genuinely uncontrolled, and unimaginably possible."[26] Such discernment is a corporate Christian practice of the utmost importance when seeking to move from an imagination of our having a causal role in ecclesial change to one in which we have a responsive role. Fortunately, as Moltmann points out, part of the Holy Spirit's work is to graciously pour out on churches the *charismata* required to perceive and practice that which is oriented to the *basileia* that the Spirit constitutes churches to show forth.[27] These gifts, like the gift of church itself, simply need to be received.

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[25] Manoussakis, "Anarchic Principle," 43; emphasis in original.

[26] Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 173.

[27] Moltmann, *Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 293–300.

Making the Spiritual World Accessible: Paul VI and Modern Art at the Close of Vatican II

Susie Paulik Babka

In 1932, on the occasion of opening the Vatican Picture Gallery, Pope Pius XI condemned modern art as "unfitting for service in the church because it reverts to the crude forms of the darkest ages."[1] Such a statement reflected the authority of the sixteenth-century Counter-Reformation that tried to secure control over a visually "correct" performance of Catholic teaching in the art objects in church buildings. By the nineteenth century, in what is called "Academicism," religious images had degenerated into a naïve institutionalism and sanitized illustrations for devotional purposes. Academicism meant "art" under clerical control, much like the Neo-Scholastic textbook-style theology that defined the era. Meanwhile, the Impressionist movement in painting sought the regard of nature as sacred in its wildness, pressing these Catholic boundaries, especially in France. But the more widespread modernist movements in art became, the more the clerical Church remained obdurate.

We all are aware of the magnitude of significance regarding Vatican II's engagement with the modern world. But few of us are aware of the

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[1] Pius XI, Address, October 27, 1932, *Acta Apostolica Sedis* 24 (1932): 335.

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aesthetic and artistic dimensions of these reforms. Pope Paul VI was that rare cleric who declared the modern artist "a prophet and a poet of today's man, his mentality and modern society [… modern art] shows us that religious values were freely and suitably expressed, we are happy and full of hope."[2] This hope, from one known for his pessimism, reveals a side of Paul VI rarely seen. This chapter explores the significance of modern art as a challenge to authoritarianism, in that hope that art in the Catholic Church will one day no longer be a mere reflection of clerical authority, but rather an expression that serves the incomprehensible God.

What Is "Modern Art"?

In order to understand why the encounter between the Church and Modernism can be framed through its relationship with modern art, it is important to have a sense of what is meant by "modern art." Modern art in popular discourse is largely misunderstood, usually treated as what "my kid could do"—requiring no artistic skill because the appeal to abstraction avoids "reality" and perhaps anything pleasing on the canvas—as well as political messages or disturbing sexuality and an apparent hostility to beauty and technique. The lack of easily accessible interpretation and the disconcerting appearance of much of modern art contribute to this popular sense that "art" of the twentieth century and beyond is an elitist enterprise, perhaps even a fraud.[3]

The term "modern" itself comes from the Latin *modo*, meaning "just now." In 1127, Abbot Suger began reconstruction on the abbey basilica of St-Denis near Paris. His architectural ideas resulted in something never seen before, a "new look" neither classically Greek, nor Roman, and so he termed it an *opus modernum*, "a modern work." Italian theorists in the late Renaissance called it "Gothic," initially as an insult, referring to anything after the fall of Rome, anything that resisted classical style, as crude and "barbaric." The term "modernity," on the other hand, refers to the

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[2] *L'Osservatore Romano* (June 24, 1973): 1–2.

[3] Cynthia Freeman, in: *But is it Art? An Introduction to Art Theory*, writes, "Art's language isn't literal […]. You understand its meaning because of your knowledge, and art requires knowledge of context and culture […]. A good interpretation must be grounded in reasons and evidence, and should provide a rich, complex, and illuminating way to comprehend a work of art. Sometimes an interpretation can transform an experience of art from repugnance to appreciation and understanding," (Oxford University Press, 2001): 150.

overwhelming cultural, social, scientific, economic, and political changes in the Western world particularly experienced since the scientific revolution. "Modernity" refers to the way new forms of transportation necessitated the designation of time zones, the way photography altered the depiction of reality, the way materials such as steel and reinforced concrete resulted in buildings that could rise over three stories. Such advancements created enormous confidence in the notion of historical progress and scientific discovery, but often at a human cost. The assembly line alienated persons from craft while also providing desperately needed jobs; labor became capital. The industrial age's consequent urbanization alienated humans from life within the rhythms of the earth. Foucault in his study *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason,* argues that the establishment of reason as modernity's engine creates "madness" as an opposing category: we know we are "sane" when we can scapegoat what is misunderstood in the Other as "insane."[4] Zygmunt Bauman writes that the *Shoah* was the intersection of scientific advancement and what was ignored by modernity, namely the weakness and fragility of human beings; Nazism emerged from "the desire for a fully designed, fully controlled world."[5] The extermination of millions was carried out with assembly-line efficiency.

Reacting to all this is the "modernist" era in art, literature, and music, in which the arts are characterized by an open-ended self-questioning beyond concepts or categories. While there are many modernisms, or schools of modernism, modernism in art is generally characterized by an interest to deviate from linear and rational thinking, to seek reality in new dimensions and forms. Jean-François Lyotard writes, "modern art presents the fact that the unpresentable exists. To make visible that there is something which can be conceived, and which can neither be seen nor made visible: this is what is at stake in modern painting."[6] How does one

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[4] Michel Foucault's extensive historical work argues that after the "age of reason," the creation of binary opposition between "sane" and "insane" translated into the creation of the asylum in "The Great Confinement": "We must describe, from the start of its trajectory, that 'other form' which relegates Reason and Madness to one side or the other of its action as things henceforth external, deaf to all exchange, and as though dead to one another," *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), ix.

[5] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1989), 93.

[6] Jean-François Lyotard, "What is Postmodernism?" in *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 79.

imagine the unpresentable? In an embrace of innovative modes of abstraction.

What is abstraction? Western cultures tend to see images as direct *reflections* of the world rather than as constructs, or interpretations, of seeing the world. This is because images in Western art have tended to confirm a correspondence model of language and thing or image and thing: an image, like a word, must directly correspond to a thing to be intelligible. This is why realism has been the dominant direction of artistic method in the construction of images in the West, reaching an apex in the discovery of mathematical one-point perspective in 1415, and also why contemporary people who are not accustomed to questioning the veracity of the correspondence model of language or image find any abstraction so confusing. But realism—even photographic realism—is also an abstraction; if we think that such "realism" intends to portray reality, and that detailed portrayal of reality is "proof" of the artist's skill, which therefore makes the painting "good," we then assume that there is no artifice in the construction of realistic images. We may assume that we witness an *objective* reality, when we always witness an artist's *interpretation* of reality. Today, postmodern thought acknowledges that no work has a single meaning to be discovered, but rather a multiplicity of meanings that can be followed in many different directions. Because art interprets the experience of reality, it shapes our way of seeing and understanding reality. In this sense, visual art is a collaborative effort between the artist and the viewer.

Modern art is characterized by a willingness to experiment with new visual languages, especially those dissociated from strict realism. Modernist art wants the viewer to recognize the deliberate artifice of representation. Impressionism undermined the idea of a fixed or absolute experience of reality by revealing dimensions of emotional perception by the artist. Cubism went further by claiming that an object does not have an unqualified shape or surface, rejecting the rules of perspective, embracing the two dimensions of the canvas. Surrealism challenged linear and rational thought, attempting to unlock the insight of the subconscious mind. Abstract Expressionism relied on large canvases meant to encompass the viewer, creating a contemplative experience where symbol or representation was disdained for fields, drips, or zips of color. As Barnett Newman observed, "After the monstrosity of the war, what do we do? What is there

to paint? We have to start all over again."[7] The immensity of suffering in the twentieth century was anxious for new forms of expression and lament. The "signs of the times" addressed by the Catholic Church during Vatican II would need to consider that art assumes fluidity of expression, especially in the wake of catastrophe.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE ARTS BEFORE VATICAN II

The Catholic Church was once the world's most powerful patron of the arts, but this changed in the mid-nineteenth century, after the dissolution of Papal States in 1870 led to a decline in the Vatican's power. Despite this, the clerical church clung to the former standard of patronage in which authority dictates the subject matter, but they were only able to find mediocre talents willing to paint to their requests, the sentimental and gaudy forms of academicism designed to placate the faithful. Pope Pius XII in *Mediator Dei* (1947) condemned the *avant garde*: "those works of art, recently introduced by some which seem to be a distortion and perversion of true art and which at times openly shock Christian taste."[8]

In *L'Osservatore Romano* of June 1951, Cardinal Celso Constantini, secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, attacked the modernist iconography in the Dominican church at Assy, Notre Dame de Toute Grace, and the Sacred Art Movement led by Fr. Marie-Alain Couturier, O.P. (1897–1954) and the French Dominicans; that same month, Henri Matisse's chapel in Vence, France was consecrated. A year later, in April 1952, Pius XII gave a speech to Italian artists designed to affirm "the promoters of the figurative arts"; in June, the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office issued an instruction on sacred art meant to be an official condemnation of the French Dominican movement. In 1953, restrictions on the Dominicans meant silencing the periodical *L'Art Sacré* edited by Couturier, an artist whose stained glass and frescoes can be found in Assy, alongside the work of Matisse, Marc Chagall, and a crucifix designed by Germaine Richier, which was deemed "insufficient." Couturier was criticized for commissioning non-Catholics to create religious art in

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[7] See William Eaton, "Guston, Shapiro, Rosenberg … Dialogue," *Zeteo* July 2016 at: https://zeteojournal.com/2016/07/13/dialogue-guston-schapiro-rosenberg-schimmel-eaton/#_ftnref29 (accessed September 9, 2020).

[8] Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei* (1947), article 195.

church buildings; his response: "This fact may be irritating, but at the present time it is undeniable. The Spirit breathes where the Spirit will."[9] On October 11, 1953, Celso appealed for the "expulsion" and "barring" of all modernist works as they are a "true profanation" of the sacred.[10] In 1954, Yves Congar wrote, "it is essentially by the celebration of the mystery of the body of Christ that a place becomes a church," praising Couturier as an example of work produced through a simplicity and transparency "that asserts the Glory of God in the poverty of man."[11]

Toward Modernism in Art and the Catholic Church

The shift toward modernism in the Catholic Church thus had begun in more ways than one when John XXIII became pope. After calling for an ecumenical council to be convened in Rome in 1959, John issued *Princeps Pastorum*, which affirmed the direction of art related to the modernist tendencies that had been attacked by Celso:

> The Church […] so full of youthful vigor, constantly renewed by the breath of the Holy Spirit, is willing, at all times, to recognize, welcome, and even assimilate anything that redounds to the honor of the human mind and heart, whether or not it originates in parts of the world washed by the Mediterranean Sea.[12]

Congar was appointed theological consultant to the preparatory commission that helped write *Message to the World* given at the opening of Vatican II. Couturier died in 1954, but his influence on the Council continued when copies of his writings were distributed to members of the committee that formulated *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy*.[13] Pope Paul VI opened the Collection of Modern Religious Art at the Vatican Museums in 1973. The collection is remarkable, consisting of over 800 works occupying 55 rooms, the majority of which were donated

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[9] Marie-Alain Couturier, O.P., *Sacred Art* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press and the de Menil Foundation, 1989), 154.

[10] *L'Osservatore Romano*, October 11, 1953, p. 5.

[11] Yves Congar, *Priest and Layman* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1967), 237.

[12] Pope John XXIII, *Princeps Pastorum* (November 1959), §36.

[13] See Grete Refsum, "The French Dominican Fathers as Precursors to the Directives on Art of the Second Vatican Council," (Dissertation, Kunsthogskolen Oslo, National College of Art and Design, 2001), 25.

by artists and collectors to the Holy See; but finding the collection on a visit can take some doing. There are few signs indicating its existence. There is no published catalog of the works and little has been done to promote the collection's existence. So Paul VI opened the door (or the basement, so to speak, since part of collection is housed below the Sistine Chapel), and the relationship between the Catholic Church and modern art continues in its awkward way.

Paul VI regarded the artist as a person called to render visible that which is transcendent, inexpressible, "ineffable" in the fullness of his expressive freedom and therefore in the exercise of his "creative" spontaneity. At the beginning of his pontificate in May 1964, he invited artists to mass at the Sistine Chapel, trying to repair the strained relationship:

> […] in all sincerity and boldness we admit we have caused you pain, imposing imitation on you who are creators, giving life to a thousand new ideas and innovations. We said you must adapt to our style, you must be faithful to this tradition […]. Forgive us for having placed on you a cloak of lead! And then we abandoned you.[14]

Similarly, in his address to artists at the close of Vatican II on 8 December 1965 he said:

> To all of you, the Church of the council declares to you through our voice: if you are friends of genuine art, you are our friends […]. You have aided her in translating her divine message in the language of forms and figures, making the invisible world palpable […]. This world in which we live needs beauty in order not to sink into despair […]. Remember that you are the guardians of beauty in the world.[15]

In his encyclical *Le nobili espressioni*, Paul VI apologized to artists for the way the Church had imposed imitation and style on them through the centuries. The Constitution on Sacred Liturgy does this as well; its chapter on sacred art affirms a new relationship with artists, encouraging bishops and others in authority to seek out the best religious art that reflects the

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[14] Paul VI, "The Friendship of Artists and the Church," *The Pope Speaks* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1964), vol. 9, No. 4, 392–93.

[15] Paul VI, *Address to Artists at the Closing of the Second Vatican Council* at: http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1965/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19651208_epilogo-concilio-artisti.html (accessed February 23, 2020).

times. But the Constitution also advises bishops to educate artists on appropriate artistic content and iconographical schemes. This is problematic, to say the least, and actually commits the same authoritative overreach for which it had previously apologized. Recall Augustine's famous line, "Make me chaste, O Lord, but not yet": clerical authority admits to overstepping their expertise and then creates a loophole by which they continue to do just that.

If abstract and challenging forms of expression were allowed in sacred spaces, the art through which the raw energy of human creativity can freely roam will nurture new ways of approaching the depths of the divine. Paul VI understood this: "Our common ministry, artist and priest, consists in rendering the world of the spirit accessible. Artists are masters, not in the manner of professors of logic or mathematics, but in the manner of preserving the ineffability of the spiritual world, its halo of mystery."[16] Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council in an interest to bring the Church into the modern era; Pope Paul VI closed the council in the belief that art, historically critical to the life and work of the Church, would in the modern era provide "a new epiphany of beauty in this time and apt responses to the particular needs of the Christian community."[17]

[16] Paul VI, "The Friendship of Artists and the Church," 393.
[17] Paul VI, "Address to Artists," op. cit.

Women Changing the Church: The Experience of the Council for Australian Catholic Women 2000–2019

Patricia Madigan O.P.

It is no accident, but one of the "signs of the times," that two important ecclesial events which occurred at the end of 2019—a three-week Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazonian Region which concluded in Rome on the 27 October, and a two-year dialogue on Church life in Germany begun on 1 December by the president of the German Catholic Bishops' Conference and the vice-president of the Central Committee of German Catholics (ZdK)—listed the presence and participation of women in the Church high on their agenda. The Australian church too has experienced its own ecclesial process of listening to women and attempting to strengthen the participation of women through a series of decisions and events which began in the 1970s and will feed into the Plenary Council planned for 2020–2021.

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WOMEN IN THE CHURCH: THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

After the publication of the annual Social Justice Sunday Statement, *Towards a More Whole Church*, by the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in 1977 which addressed a range of gender issues in the Church, the Bishops received many responses from which it was clear that issues concerning the role and status of women were a high priority community social justice concern.[1]

Discussion continued for many years until, in 1993, the bishops agreed to look at the possibility of a national survey on the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia to be conducted at diocesan level and coordinated nationally. These discussions eventually became fruitful through the hard work and persistence of women such as Sr Anne Lane PBVM, Ms Bernice Moore, and Sr Margaret Hinchey RSM from the Sub-Committee on Women's Issues, Catholic Coalition for Justice and Peace (CCJP), and Ms. Sandie Cornish from the Secretariat of the Bishops' Commission for Justice, Peace, and Development (BCJDP). Some key men at this stage were Bishop William Brennan, Chair of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ASCJC), and Dr Michael Costigan from the BCJDP Secretariat who was also instrumental in enlisting the research expertise of Professor Peter Drake, the first vice-chancellor of the newly formed Australian Catholic University (ACU).[2]

At the same time as a deluge of pronouncements, letters, and statements attempting to reinforce the limitations placed on women in the Church issued from Vatican in the 1990s,[3] the BCJDP wanted to respond to the call by women to be taken more seriously in the Church and to be more fully involved in a variety of aspects of its life, although it recognized that any response would need to be set squarely in the context of the recent church teaching on the Ordination of Women and its disciplinary consequences.

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[1] Research Management Group (RMG), *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus: Report on the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia* (Sydney: HarperCollinsReligious, 1999), 1–2 https://women.catholic.org.au/treasures/woman-and-man (accessed February 17, 2020).

[2] Ibid., 2–3.

[3] These included Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter on priestly ordination and women, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994), his 1995 Holy Thursday letter to priests, his Letter to Women (29 June 1995), his remarks on women in the Church on 3 September 1995, and a response by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith concerning the Inadmissibility of Women to Ministerial Priesthood (30 November 1995). Ibid., xi, 5.

The end result was that, after an involved process of bringing together various personnel, church agencies, institutions and sources of finance, a Research Management Group (RMG) was appointed to oversee the conduct of the research project on *The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia* which would report its findings to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) through the BCJDP.

The Research Project on "The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia"

The Australian Church launched its ecclesial process of listening to women and attempting to strengthen the participation of women in the Church, with a four-year research project (1996–1999), an initiative which eventually led to two decades of innovative projects and activities which empowered women and expanded their contribution in the Australian church.

At the launch of the Research Project, Cardinal Edward Clancy, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference on 21 August 1996, said:

> We know that the Church as a whole has much to learn from and about women, who constitute more than half its membership […]. We know that their contribution over the centuries and today has been (and is) enormous, even if not fully recognised and valued.
>
> We are also aware, as Pope John Paul II has acknowledged, that the Church's history has often been characterised by mistaken attitudes and actions in this as in other areas; and that the brief period between now and the Church's Year of Jubilee (AD 2000) is an appropriate time for us to acknowledge, repent for, and begin to remedy those mistakes of the past.[4]

The research was carried out in two main ways: hearings would be conducted across Australia in all State and Territory capital cities and in a range of provincial cities, and through written submissions by groups and individuals who were asked to respond to one or more key research questions. The intention was to provide an opportunity for anyone who wished to express their views on women's participation in the Catholic Church.[5]

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[4] Ibid., 17.
[5] Ibid., 15, 53–55.

The response was beyond what anyone had imagined. More than 2500 written submissions were made which was more than double the number expected. They came from leadership teams of religious orders, Catholic organizations at both state and national levels, and leadership teams of dioceses and parishes. Many came from leading individuals in the Catholic community, both laity and clergy, and from some outstanding scholars.[6]

The final report on the outcomes of the survey, *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus*, was launched on 18 August 1999 at the National Press Club in Canberra. Sonia Wagner SGS, who had been a member of the RMG, commented: "The fact that the bishops of Australia agreed to publish the report in its entirety, with no censoring of the findings, makes the document highly significant and extremely important."[7]

The research revealed a strong sense of pain and alienation resulting from the Church's stance on women.[8] The dominant issue arising from the research was gender equality—recognizing the equal dignity of women and men created in the image and likeness of God.[9] The report recognized that the lack of women's participation "arises not because the demands of serving the Gospel and the Church are too great" or because Catholic women lack the skill or willingness to contribute, but rather because there "are too few and limited ways to be of service in the decision-making, leadership and ministerial roles of the Church."[10] The Church was seen to be lagging behind the wider Australian society in recognizing the changing role of women as one of the 'signs of the times' and affirming the equality of women. The very limited participation of women in decision-making at present and the need to increase women's involvement in decision-making at all levels were constant and major themes.[11]

The Social Justice Sunday Statement of September 2000 published the bishops' response to the report, including its nine Decisions of national

[6] Ibid., 56.

[7] Sonia Wagner SGS, "Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus: A Retrospective." Paper given at the conference "Women: Gathering, Affirming, Celebrating" in Canberra, 26–28 August 2009 https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Sonia-Wagner-Woman-and-Man-article-2009.pdf (accessed February 17, 2020).

[8] RMG, *Woman*, 375.

[9] Ibid., 394.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., Executive Summary, vii–viii.

significance and 31 Proposals for possible implementation at diocesan level.[12]

The nine Decisions to which the ACBC committed itself included: (a) to achieve a better balance of men and women in existing leadership bodies and professional roles within the church at a national level; (b) to develop employment policies to promote the equality and dignity of women; (c) to foster research in the areas of theology and pastoral ministry which would promote lay ministry and, in particular, women in ecclesial ministry, as well as in the area of theology of the human person, sexuality, marriage and family life, especially as it relates to the contemporary life of Catholic women; (d) to provide at the national level, through the Bishops Committee for Liturgy, guidelines and resources, including the application of inclusive language, for use in the church's liturgy, prayer, and pastoral and social life; (e) to draw up policies of care to respond to the pain of those who are struggling with the implications of church teaching, e.g. those suffering the pain of failed marriage or divorce, and to provide support at times of pastoral need; (f) to enter into dialogue with Australian Indigenous peoples regarding their priorities and respond to requests received from Indigenous Australians and others for married clergy and women deacons.[13]

The 31 Proposals which bishops might consider taking up in their dioceses included (a) a better balance of men and women, clergy, religious, and laity be included on existing councils, organizations, and advisory bodies; (b) establishment of diocesan pastoral councils where they do not already exist, with a balance of men and women so that women's participation may be increased; (c) clergy, religious, and lay people be encouraged and trained to exercise their ministries in a more collaborative manner; (d) the role of parish Pastoral Associate be actively developed and promoted by Bishops where appropriate; (e) more women be appointed to marriage tribunals and, where necessary, undertake specialist training; (f) recognition and promotion of equality and inclusivity for Australia's Indigenous peoples by all Church bodies, and inclusion of Aboriginal women as part

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[12] Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, "Woman and Man: The Bishops Respond—Social Justice Sunday Statement 2000," *in Building Bridges: Social Justice Statements from Australia's Catholic Bishops, 1988–2013* (2014).

[13] Ibid., 7–10.

of decision-making in matters which affect them; (g) greater attention be given to the education of clergy, religious, and laity toward attitudinal change in recognizing equal value, equal rights of women and men within the lay faithful of the church; (h) qualified women be encouraged to act as Church spokespersons and as guest speakers at Church conferences, ceremonies, and functions.[14]

Undoubtedly, the most significant decision of all was that the ACBC would establish a Commission for Australian Catholic Women which would play a key role in guiding and implementing the entire action plan. The Commission had a mandate to (1) act as a focal point for ongoing dialogue and integration of ideas pertaining to women and their participation in the Catholic Church in Australia; and (2) assist in the implementation of the decisions and recommendations.[15]

The Commission for Australian Catholic Women

The Commission for Australian Catholic Women (CACW) was established by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference in the year 2000 as a response to the RMG report. Members would be appointed by the ACBC and would consist of a Chair and eight members from around Australia, "indicative of the multicultural nature of Australia," as well as an Executive Officer. All would be appointed for 3 years, with the possibility of reappointment. The Commission was formally commissioned on June 15, 2001, in the crypt of St Mary's Cathedral and was charged by the bishops with monitoring the development of strategic planning and evaluation of the outcomes of the ACBC recommendations. It was to report directly to the Bishops' Conference.

The CACW began its life with a burst of energy and activity. Its inaugural Chair, Geraldine Hawkes (2001–2006), and Executive Officer, Therese Vassarotti (2001–2005), visited many, if not all, of the Australian dioceses, met with women to discern their needs, and a number of initiatives were begun.

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[14] Ibid., 14–15.
[15] Ibid., 10–13.

However, by the year 2006, when the bishops undertook a review of the structures of the Bishops' Conference, the status of the women's Commission was changed to that of a Council, with an advisory role only as well as a change in mandate. One serious consequence was that it now had no direct input into the Bishops' Conference and its level of authority was reduced. In 2009 Sonia Wagner SGS asked "Has the project been forgotten? Perhaps. Is the project finished? Definitely not. Is the project a work in progress? I think so."[16]

She believed that the change in status from a Commission to a Council can be seen as a diminution of the importance of the matter of women in the Church and a failure to follow through on the *Woman and Man* Report. She notes that the Council now merely advises the bishops and the lines of communication and accountability are somewhat unclear. She asks: "Who is responsible for ensuring that the participation of women remains on the agenda? What accountability is there for the decisions and proposals contained in *Woman and Man*? What happens if a particular diocese does not see the participation of women is an issue? When a new bishop is appointed, in addition to pledging loyalty to the Pope in regard to the ordination of women question, is he also required to promise to engage the wisdom, gifts and talents of women in his diocese?"[17]

The years since 2009 have seen further diminishment of the Council with reduction in members and staffing as Church finances tightened largely due to declining Mass attendance and financial demands associated with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse established in 2013 by the Australian Government, and also the establishment of a National Redress Scheme created in June 2018 in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. It was noted at the triennial Catholic Women's Colloquium held in 2019[18] that very few of the nine Decisions of national significance and the 31 Proposals for implementation at diocesan level outlined in the *Woman and Man* report have been effectively implemented.

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[16] Wagner, "Woman and Man".

[17] Ibid.

[18] Organised by the now *Council* for Australian Catholic Women with the theme "Stirring the Waters," it took place in Adelaide in February 2019 and was attended by 160 women.

Over the years of its existence, the Commission/Council for Australian Catholic Women built up a proud record of achievement, despite being constrained by so many restrictions on women in the Church. Some examples were:

The Leadership for Mission Program[19] This is a specialised leadership program for young Catholic women aged 25–35, a joint initiative of the Council for Australian Catholic Women, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, Catholic Mission and the Australian Catholic University. This course was selected for inclusion on a Vatican website promoting best practices in lay formation, and was featured at the first Plenary Assembly of the Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, November 24–28, 2019.

The Triennial Catholic Women's Colloquium The next Colloquium is scheduled for 2022.

An Anthology "Still Listening to the Spirit: Woman and Man Twenty Years Later" This was published in 2019 to mark another important anniversary of the 1999 Report. Many of the chapters in the Anthology were first presented at the Adelaide Colloquium and the booklet is expected to be a significant resource for the discernment processes leading into the Plenary Council in 2020.[20]

Supporting Women's Input to the Plenary Council 2020–2021 CACW organised a number of interactive forums—in Sydney (June, 2018), Perth (October, 2018), Adelaide (February, 2019), and Melbourne (October, 2019).

Guidelines for Non-Discriminatory Language This led to the drafting of Guidelines for use in the Catholic Church in Australia.

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[19] See   https://www.opw.catholic.org.au/projects/leadership-for-mission   (accessed February 17, 2020).

[20] Sandie Cornish and Andrea Dean, eds., *Still Listening to the Spirit: Woman and Man Twenty Years Later* (Sydney: Office for Social Justice Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2019).

Catholic Women's Mentoring[21] This was a national initiative aimed at building the skills, confidence and networks of Australian Catholic women and encouraging them in their faith.

Media This has led to the dissemination of Statements at times of national significance for women, e.g., International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Frequent media requests for interviews and information have been made, for example, by ABC radio and TV.

In November 2019 the ACBC, with its Budget under severe strain, underwent another restructuring process which led to the disbanding of many of the Councils of the Bishops' Conference, including the Council for Australian Catholic Women. There is a huge irony in this: At the same time as there continues to be a growing awareness of the need for an incisive presence of women at all levels of Church life, the absence of any structures to enable this is more apparent than ever.

CONCLUSION

The most striking aspect of the story of the Commission/Council for Australian Catholic Women is the lack of agency which continues for women in the Church. Apart from the early initiatives of women in the creation and functioning of the Research Management Group, all decisions from that time—appointments, allocation of funds, and even the continuance of the Commission/Council itself—were the prerogative of an all-male episcopacy.

Another factor that needs to be addressed is the intimidating role that the Vatican Curia and its culture play in keeping national and regional Bishops' Conferences quiescent about many issues, including those affecting women.

A real question persists about whether the best way of incorporating the contribution of women into the Church is to create a separate "fiefdom" for women within the patriarchal structures of the Church rather than promoting women as equals across the board.[22] Would it not be more

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[21] See   https://www.opw.catholic.org.au/projects/mentoring   (accessed   February 17, 2020).

[22] Rita Ferrone, "Don't Blame the Patriarchy," *Commonweal*, March 28, 2019 at: https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/dont-blame-patriarchy (accessed February 17, 2020).

productive to have women's concerns, expertise, and thoughtfulness wholly integrated into the life and mission of the Church? In both the Jesus movement and in the earliest years of the Church there was neither "male nor female; for all were one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28). How long will it take for the Church community to understand that patriarchy is incompatible with the Christian life and antithetical to the Gospel?[23]

In line with some recent Catholic Church assemblies in other parts of the world, these issues will be very much to the fore in the Australian Plenary Council 2020–2021.

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[23] R. Petrus, "Patriarchy to Blame in Scaraffia's Resignation from Women Church World," *Future Church*, 7 November 2019 at: https://www.futurechurchnews.org/article/patriarchy-to-blame-in-scaraffias-resignation-from-women-church-world (accessed September 9, 2020).

The Unity of the Church and Birth Control in an Age of Polarization

Dennis M. Doyle

Catholics have historically maintained a special concern for church unity. Unity is not uniformity, but it does call for people to be bonded together amid differences. Yet we live now in an age of polarization. Polarization has changed the ways in which people relate with each other. I will argue that the present situation calls for all of us to prioritize making changes within ourselves and in how we relate to each other.

In a recent book, Ezra Klein draws upon a wealth of social scientific studies to document the significantly increased polarization in contemporary US society and politics.[1] He shows how in the 1950s strong differences regarding political policy were spread out *within* the two major political parties. Very gradually over many decades even stronger differences have emerged *between* the parties as American voters have sorted themselves out into two distinct political groups. Ideological differences have given way to identitarian differences.[2] For many people in the US today, being a Republican or a Democrat forms not just one element

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[1] Ezra Klein, *Why We're Polarized* (New York: Avid Reader Press, 2020).
[2] Ibid., 232.

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among others of their identity but rather functions as the very basis of it. Klein demonstrates how polarization, in contrast with a healthy diversity, fosters hatred of the other as a core motivation, at times deeper than the ideals one champions. An individual's vote is determined in many cases more by what one is voting against than by what one is voting for. The highest value is placed upon the victory of your side.

Klein draws upon many studies to explain that all human beings are significantly influenced by psychological, social, and other demographic factors in what they accept as knowledge and truth. We are all susceptible to "confirmation bias" and "identity-protection cognition."[3] That such influence exists is nothing new. Klein writes: "What is changing is not our psychologies. What is changing is how closely our psychologies map onto our politics and onto a host of other life choices."[4]

A striking example of the polarization that currently plagues the Catholic Church can be found in two opposing statements, both issued in September 2016, concerning artificial contraception, one by the progressive Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, an international group based in the UK, and the other by an ad hoc conservative, international group of Catholic scholars based in Washington, D.C. The Wijngaards Statement was issued at a conference held at the United Nations.[5] The conservative response (hereinafter Response) was released at a news conference at the Catholic University of America.[6]

The authors of the Wijngaards Statement lay out nineteen major points including several sub-points. They claim the main argument underlying the official Catholic ban on artificial contraception is anchored in the belief that every act of intercourse includes procreation as a dimension of

[3] Ibid., 96.

[4] Ibid., 46.

[5] "Academic Report on the Ethical Use of Contraceptives," (previously issued as drafts with various titles). Wijngaards Institute for Catholic Research, posted October 2016, https://www.wijngaardsinstitute.com/statement-on-contraceptives/ (accessed February 11, 2020); see also Jamie Manson, "Catholic Church's Total Ban on Contraception Challenged by Scholars," *National Catholic Reporter,* 21 September 2016, https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/grace-margins/catholic-churchs-total-ban-contraception-challenged-scholars (accessed February 11, 2020).

[6] "Affirmation of the Church's Teaching on the Gift of Sexuality," signed by many Catholic scholars, 21 September 2016, https://trs.catholic.edu/humanae-vitae/index.html (accessed February 11, 2020). See also Carol Zimmermann, "Scholars Reaffirm Catholic Teaching against Artificial Birth Control," *Catholic News Service,* 21 September 2016.

its finality and meaning. In reality, they argue, the vast majority of such acts do not have a biological capacity for procreation. They find no grounds, either in the Bible or in nature, to justify the Catholic teaching. They assert that artificial contraception and natural family planning are morally equivalent in that both allow for sexual intercourse with the intention of preventing conception. They point to practical advantages of contraceptive practices both in family planning and in life-saving disease prevention. In some cases, they say, the use of prophylactics constitutes an ethical imperative. Finally, the statement recommends that the Catholic magisterium consult experts in many relevant fields and that the results of such consultation be taken seriously.

The conservative Response affirmed *Humane vitae's* claim that all contraceptive acts are against the natural law and therefore contrary to Divine Law. After an introduction that criticized the Wijngaards Statement for misrepresenting Catholic teaching, it offered eleven points that draw upon John Paul II's Theology of the Body to place Catholic teaching on contraception within a biblical vision of creation and the human person.[7] In addition, the response makes several positive claims about the spiritual and practical benefits of natural family planning (hereinafter NFP).[8]

Going back and forth from one statement to the other, the reader moves between two different world-shaping narratives based on a host of conflicting presuppositions. There exists a chasm between the two perspectives.

There have been some attempts to mediate between the two worldviews. Julie Hanlon Rubio, for example, finds the polar opposition to be characteristic of the post-Vatican II generation. She takes an approach she considers to be more amenable to a younger generation of Catholics as she brackets questions about the rightness or wrongness of moral norms and instead focuses on fostering dialogue about the values associated with

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[7] John Paul II's writings on this subject can be found in *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body,* translated by Michael Waldstein (Pauline Books and Media, 2006 [1986]). Scholarship supporting the authors of the Response can be found in *Why Humanae Vitae Is Still Right,* edited by Janet E. Smith (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018).

[8] These methods are now often referred to collectively as "fertility awareness based methods of family planning." For an explanation of the variety of such methods including their effectiveness, costs, advantages, and difficulties, see Simcha Fisher, "Moving Beyond the Rhythm Method," *America,* 3 February 2020, 18–25.

different practices.[9] The courtroom atmosphere created by the Wijngaards Statement and the conservative Response might in this perspective represent something of the final anguished cries of a breed that is taking its last breaths. The current state of polarization in the Catholic Church and in society, however, indicates that this process of dying may be a long one.[10]

I sympathize with the goals of the Wijngaards Statement insofar as it de-stigmatizes the use of artificial birth control (hereinafter ABC) by married couples and includes the use of prophylactics in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS. By many measures, the abstinence-only approach to sex education and health care taken by Catholic institutions on a global scale is problematic.[11] I have friends who signed the Wijngaards Statement, and I agree with their main point, that there should not be a total ban on the use of ABC. I could not, however, bring myself to sign the statement. I felt deeply that, in this age of polarization, both its content and tone were unnecessarily one-sided and righteous.

Contemporary polarization is so bad that it is not enough, in my judgment, simply to be secure in one's own rightness and either ignore or go to battle with those wrong people on the other side. We all need to change the ways in which we engage each other in debate, focusing more on trying to understand and communicate with one another. I do not deny that there are occasions when one side is completely right and the other side is completely wrong. I am not interested, for example, in finding the middle ground between environmental activists and climate change deniers. In the clashing of tectonic plates represented by Catholic battles over ABC

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[9] Julie Hanlon Rubio, "Beyond the Liberal/Conservative Divide on Contraception: The Wisdom of Practitioners of Natural Family Planning and Artificial Birth Control," *Horizons* 32 (2005): 270–294. See also Mary Ellen Konieczny, Charles C. Camosy, and Tricia C. Bruce, eds., *Polarization in the U.S. Catholic Church: Naming the Wounds, Beginning to Heal* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016).

[10] In a 2005 dissertation, sociologist Brian Starks found that, when compared with members of other traditions, a significantly higher percentage of Catholics tend to see differences between liberal and traditional views as healthy. See "Contemporary Catholic Identities: Ideology and Politics among American Catholics" (Ph.D. Dissertation for Indiana University, 2005). In a recent conversation, Starks told me that he does not know of any more recent studies that follow-up on this question. In our age of polarization, I fear this fact of 2005 may no longer be the case.

[11] Lauren Clark and Sarah M. Stitzlein, "Neoliberal Narratives and the Logic of Abstinence Only Education: Why Are We Still Having This Conversation?" *Gender and Education* 30 (2018): 322–340. Note: I have no objection to highlighting abstinence within a more comprehensive approach to sex education and health care.

versus NFP, however, I find a situation with sufficient depth and complexity to merit ongoing analysis and dialogue.

My complaint about the Wijngaards Statement is that it fails to recognize anything positive whatsoever in the phenomenon of the NFP movement. It relies heavily upon the refutation of the natural law argument made in *Humane vitae* supplemented by claims about the current problematic effects of the total ban on ABC. In the view of the Statement, *Humanae vitae* was wrong in 1968 and it is wrong now, with dire consequences.

Is there anything positive and true that needs to be said about the conservative response? Yes. For one thing, it makes the historically conscious claim that the NFP movement has emerged as a phenomenon in a way that it did not exist in 1968. Much of its support comes from the testimony of those who receive spiritual sustenance from its practice. Borrowing from Klein's work on polarization, I would go so far as to say that NFP forms not just a part of their ideology but even more deeply a part of their Catholic identity. These people experience NFP as fostering their relationship and even daily interaction with God. For them, NFP represents a spiritually superior experience in comparison with ABC.

What is the status of the constructed narrative world in which the promoters of NFP dwell? Is their experience merely an illusion that supports a dangerous ideology that has negative global effects? I have many Catholic intellectual friends who think so.

In my judgment, the answer is more complex, and I want to begin by affirming that I think in general the claims of people who give such testimony about their spiritual experience are very real and need to be approached respectfully and even reverently. It has become problematic in today's world for the Wijngaards Statement to claim that NFP and ABC are ethically equivalent. In 1968 ethical equivalence was a good argument made to make the point that ABC should not be considered sinful. Fifty years later, that claim functions as a dismissal of the positive experiences of NFP users. Claiming an ethical equivalence between NFP and ABC has become a bit like comparing apples and oranges. Both are methods of birth control, true, but NFP has developed into something more like a devotional practice. It can be compared to Friday abstinence in that it is a periodic practice of sacrifice.

Humanae vitae was issued less than two years after the US bishops pared back the rules concerning Friday abstinence. The Vatican II thrust was toward more trust in the laity, fewer requirements, less focus on

sacrifice, and more assimilation through relaxation of distinctive Catholic identity markers.[12] The laity were being empowered to live lives of holiness in the realms of family, work, and society. The thrust of *Humanae vitae* was toward sacrifice, Catholic distinctiveness, and obeying a pope whose authority transcended that of worldly rulers. The majority of the Catholic laity were not going to have it. I would suggest, now more than fifty years later, and speaking from a bird's eye view, that there is a legitimate dialectic to be lived out between these two thrusts. I am not suggesting some kind of equivalence between the two poles, but both sides need to find ways to break out of the polar opposition.

The Wijngaards Statement does little to engage various components of their opponents' worldview. Of course, they were not addressing their opponents in the statement; they were demanding change in the face of a global audience. The statement reads, however, as though its composers believe that the entire matter can be solved by a series of deductions using the rules of logical inference. In this age of polarization, however, we need to recognize that all reasoning takes place within complex and subtly constructed narrative worlds.

The signers of the Wijngaards Statement could argue that none of the points I have made about the NFP movement justify a position that all use of ABC is morally wrong. And they could also point out that the rigidity of the opposition contributes greatly to the polarized atmosphere, as well as that, for many, NFP ideology takes its place amid a range of problematic ideological positions. They could even say that I am barking up the wrong tree. Perhaps they would have a point. In this age of polarization, however, efforts like the Wijngaards Statement might be more effective if they tried to engage in respectful dialogue by striving harder to understand the point of view of the other. The authors might even try to cultivate a humble awareness that there might be something that they could learn from the other. We all need to realize that, even though we may live in different bubbles, there are yet larger worlds as well as transcendent callings in which we all share. In the best of worlds, both sides would be less Manichean in their approaches. The NFP movement would back away

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[12] Stephen R. Schloesser documents how the negative lay reception of *Humane Vitae* was shaped by fifty years of lay movements that stressed internalizing authority, personal mysticism, and social action. See "1918–1968–2018: A Tissue of Laws and Choices and Chance," *Theological Studies* 79 (2018): 487–519. See also Leslie Woodcock Tentler, *Catholics, and Contraception: An American History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

from its dire warnings about the evils of ABC, and the promoters of comprehensive sex education and health care would be open to the legitimacy of claims about the spiritual benefits of NFP for those who practice it.

Catholic unity is a precious and fragile commodity in our age of polarization. Ezra Klein concludes that polarization in and of itself is not so much a problem as it is simply a description of the way things currently are. US citizens must to some extent accept the fact that they live in an age of polarization and develop coping strategies, one of which is to depolarize ourselves.[13] In my judgment, Klein might be right about the United States in general, but I believe that, for Catholics, polarization in the Catholic Church and in the larger society is a problem. Polarization is distinct from simple diversity insofar as it involves the formation of sectarian identities that thrive on despising the other. Catholic communities should consist of people who love each other through Christ and the Holy Spirit. Insofar as polarization fosters disrespect and even hatred of the other, acts that cause or maintain polarization must be named as sin. It belongs to the mission of the Catholic Church to overcome polarization within itself and in the society at large.

[13] Klein, *Polarized,* 249–268.

Mission and World Christianity

The World Mission of the Christian Church

Roger Haight S.J.

This chapter proposes a theological conception of the mission of the church in the world as we know it today. Important factors have arisen since the mid-twentieth century and changed our thinking. One can list factors in a revolution in Christian consciousness: a new historical and pluralist consciousness that gave rise to the World Council of Churches; a new awareness and positive appreciation of other religions brought on by human mobility, urbanization, and development; a new planetary consciousness of common human solidarity in responsibility for the world; a new evolutionary consciousness and sense of need for a definition of the purpose of the church within history.

These developments have given rise to a new context of our thinking about the world mission of the Christian church and the churches in their contexts. I will turn to the concept of reconciliation as a possible symbol for gathering new thoughts about the mission of the church in history. I do not examine the eschatological role of the church and I leave to the reader to contrast this theology with earlier views. In the mode of an

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outline, what follows will display a bare logic as a stimulus for reconceiving the mission of the church in our contemporary world.

The Origin of the Church

The church gradually emerged out of a Jewish "sectarian" Jesus movement and eventually won its identity as an autonomous religious entity distinct from Judaism.[1] The appropriation of this protracted historical development has been uneasy on both sides: Jews have dropped Jesus as one of their prophets; Christians have neglected Jesus' Judaism and made him a Christian. One thing that all Christians share in common is Jesus of Nazareth interpreted as the Christ. The most basic institution of the church is the Bible because it keeps present to the whole church the closest historical witness to the origin and source of the church.

Ecclesiology as Primarily a Historical Discipline

Systematic treatments of the church must be rooted in historical circumstances. Every institutional form has to be understood in a historical context; evolutionary principles and historical study show that absolute unchanging ecclesiological polities are not possible; if they do not change, they do not last. An evolutionary and historical consciousness prevents a conception of God planning or designing a socio-political form of the church. Historical institutions always emerge out of previous history and are always shifting under the impact of historical forces. Therefore, church institutions are not meant to remain materially identical across history but to preserve the continuity of Christian faith.[2] This idea functions like a meta-principle that calls for elements in the church that provide it with the flexibility to change in order to keep itself in existence and true to its sources.

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[1] Is it imaginable that what came to be called Christianity could have remained within the boundaries of Judaism as other movements had? Such purely hypothetical questions often generate discussion that leads to deeper understanding of the historicity of the church.

[2] The word "materially" is inserted in this sentence to note that a formal office may retain the same function (for example, each congregation has a "leader") while the concrete mode of choosing and exercising such a ministry may vary considerably over time or among churches.

Historical and Evolutionary Consciousness

Relative to theology, the idea of evolution nuances creation as an ongoing process; time is constitutive of being, so that everything continually moves and being is really becoming. This framework easily translates into principles that serve as guidelines for a historical organization like the church. The point of this discussion consists of drawing operative principles from physical and life sciences and adapting them to history and cultural evolution. Four basic principles condition reflection at a basic level.

Historical Entities Are Always Evolving This principle draws the consequence of time being an intrinsic dimension of being. It follows that the church also evolves. The church cannot remain a static entity. The whole history of the church illustrates this: the church changes most when it tries to remain the same by insisting on unchanging structures and formulas. Evolutionary consciousness fundamentally alters something often taken for granted, namely, that unchanging stability is good whereas change is bad. Unchanging structures in an evolutionary world frequently display detachment from reality. This principle has to be balanced with the fact that a historical institution can so change that its essential character is altered or lost. There has to be conscious balance between change and maintaining the identity of a tradition.

Survival Dependent on Adaptation In the natural evolution of the forms of life, survival depends on the ability of an organism to adapt to changing environmental conditions. Analogously, in order to preserve its identity, the church paradoxically has to intend to continually adjust its structure to its environment. In fact, the church continually adapts to its social, historical, and cultural environment, but not always in salutary ways. Sometimes failure to meet the new conditions of existence means that culture leaves it behind. Flexible structures allow the church continually and consistently to adapt to new situations.

Reciprocal Altruistic Alliances Evolutionary history has witnessed the development of reciprocal altruistic alliances that break open a destructive competition and capitalize on new resources to meet new contingencies. This principle may be useful in considering how to address the problem of

fragmentation in the expanding Christian movement today. We need ways of thinking about "intentional" pluralism or recognized differences within a deeper desire to maintain unity. It seems absurd to break communion with God and each other in Christ because of, for example, attitudes toward gay marriage.

New Perspectives on the Purpose of the Church An evolutionary cast of thinking generates a new interest in the purpose of the church. The idea of "purpose" in evolution has various nuances, but the distinction of two different senses can set up a new question for the church today. The most common sense of purpose arises from human consciousness where a person conceives a goal and designs methods or paths to accomplish it. Another sense of purpose in line with evolution has a more restricted sense. Since evolution on an empirical level consists of random process within the constraints of nature's laws, another less personal sense of purpose refers to how parts fit into wholes. When paleontologists find tools in burial grounds, they can formulate certain assumptions about the species in question on the basis of integrity and fit. This second sense of purpose carries more pressing urgency for our conception of the relation of the church to the world today and I will appeal to it further on.

An Ecclesiology of Dialogue with the World

Church mission has to be linked with christology. The imperative for interreligious dialogue and interfaith cooperation seized attention after the creation of the World Council of Churches and with the growth of Christianity outside the West. How are Christians to relate to other religions in the same national and world communities? Does the growing Christian consciousness that other religions have their own God-given historical integrity mean that classical Christian missionary activity (looking for converts) is over? How are we to understand Christian missionary activity in an age that combines religious respect for other religions and suspicion of colonialism? Joining creation theology and the theology of grace that represents God as a constant loving Presence to all of created reality goes a long way toward providing a Christian rationale for the

autonomous authenticity of other religions.[3] God offers grace and salvation to all; and the most likely place where consciousness of God's transcendent Presence would emerge is the religion at hand. A crucial insight at this precise point consists in recognizing that Jesus' real mediation of God's transcendent Presence should not enter into competition with God's self-revelation through other media, but that Jesus' universal relevance lies precisely in affirming it.

In the next two considerations I turn explicitly to evolutionary concepts for help in understanding how the church, by actively participating in the evolutionary drift of the universe, can follow this christological lead and nurture positive and reconciling relationships with other religions.

Evolutionary consciousness explicitly adds structural dimensions to historical consciousness. The narrative of the emergence of our universe, planet, and world of conscious life adds a new dimension to historicism. By drawing out certain cosmic dimensions of our being in the world, we can clarify how the church fits into this structure.

The Unity and Diversity of Reality We live in a diversified world. If anything distinguishes present-day life from the Western period of Enlightenment, it is our sense of particularity. We can still generalize, insist on the laws of nature, and notice patterns of psychic behavior and regular dynamics of human societies marked by freedom. But we also know that each individual is unique and that a realistic appreciation of reality acknowledges the individuality of persons and the groups they form. But at the same time and in delicate balance with particularity, the continuity of the creative emergence of the universe and the intimate organicity of the interconnectedness of being mean that finite being as whole bears no concrete oneness that matches the abstract concepts. Yet we, including all physical reality, are related to each other. This evolutionary principle of interconnectedness forms a basis for morality far deeper than political expedience or conventions for mutual protection.

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[3] I make the case for the convergence of the ideas of God's primary causality, the term Thomas Aquinas used for God's creating, and God's universal love, which comes to humans as grace, in *Faith and Evolution: A Grace-Filled Naturalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2019), 85–112.

Church in Service of the World A natural tendency dictates that the self and one's group prescribe an interpretation of the rest of the world. The self is spontaneously self-centered. Human beings used to look out at a world other than the self and saw it in service of themselves; the sky and the universe circled around our world. Today we can imagine that God's revelation is for the world and the church can look out on the world as the instrument of God's Presence and address to all humanity. In the middle of the twentieth century Johannes Hoekendijk said plainly that the church's mission was to serve the world and not draw the world into itself.[4] This notion announces a comprehensive ecclesial conviction that influences everything. The local congregation's unity and community should revolve around its commitment to what it is for, the larger community; the great church should conceive of its mission as an extension of God's love for the whole human race and our planet.

Church in Relation to Other Faith Traditions A theological principle flows from considering these three premises: God's self-revelation as Presence in love to the world in Jesus Christ, the bond of unity that connects all things and all persons, and the conviction that the Christian church should be positively and constructively oriented toward the world. When we plant our self-understanding in the context of a dynamic evolutionary risingup within matter and recognize that God is present to and accompanying that process, we can accept the possibility of a certain "we" consciousness which all human beings could share. We all stand in awe of creation itself and the absolute sacred mystery that encompasses the whole of it. In this mental space, we as Christians cannot stand over against other faith traditions; we must appreciate ourselves in solidarity with them. This image reasserts the non-competitiveness of Christian revelation in relation to other religions despite all the disagreements about the content of God's revealing Presence. This conviction, at least as contrasted with a conquering world mission, represents a revolution that transforms how a Christian relates to those of other faiths. Once internalized, it should affect the relationships of local congregations to their fellow religionists as well as the universal policies of the churches and the whole church.

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[4] Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966).

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN TERMS
OF RECONCILIATION

A way of characterizing the new relationship of the church to the world and to other religions that present-day cultural consciousness pushes us towards might be "reconciliation." The symbol entails more than a passive being reconciled to the world as we find it; "reconciliation" actively portrays the nature of the mission of the church relative to the world. There are evolutionary precedents for such a far-reaching development. At various stages in cultural evolution, groups or tribes of *homo sapiens* gave up their warfare and built agricultural alliances that led to villages, towns, and an expanded cultural flourishing. Competition gradually evolved into mutually beneficial altruism.

How can we envision the possibility of Christianity being a reconciling influence in history rather than the divisive force it represents to other religions? Of course, it is one thing to imagine things like distributing food worldwide so that no people suffer from starvation or malnutrition and another to actually effect a successful self-sustaining program. But it is not unimportant to conceive possibilities. The point here, therefore, is theological, and theological reasoning can imagine a non-aggressive and reconciling missionary activity around these four principles:

Creation Christianity has grounds for an embracive interreligious spirituality in the conception of a personal creator God. God is the creator of all, and God is present to and accompanies all as the ground and goal of their being. One cannot separate this Presence from God's love; therefore, God's effective grace accompanies all human beings.

Jesus as Revealer as Distinct from Christology A distinction between Jesus of Nazareth and later Christian interpretations of him can support a non-divisive dialogical Christian mission spirituality. One can distinguish between Jesus of Nazareth revealing a relationship with God from the many Christologies and soteriologies found in the New Testament and the tradition. Introducing the Jesus of history and his ministry differs from defending a particular Christology. The missionary project may explicitly formulate its strategy as an entering into dialogue with other religions by presenting the person of Jesus of Nazareth and his basic teachings of the rule of God. It does not have to begin that dialogue with classic doctrinal

interpretations of Jesus. And it may explicitly renounce the church's goal of conversion on the basis of the doctrine of God's saving presence to all.[5]

Jesus as Reconciler Missionary dialogue with other religious communities can represent Jesus as a proponent of religious reconciliation. There is of course more to be said of Jesus, but introduction to Christianity and interreligious dialogue itself will be enhanced if the Christians who represent Jesus stay close to his public ministry and the spirituality it engenders. The critical prophetic dimension of Jesus' ministry was not based on himself, but on the value of the human person in the light of the love of the creator: the rule of God.

Compassion as a Religious Bond Many basic responses to the God whom Jesus represented resonate in other religious traditions. But one stands out as especially needed in our shared world: all authentic religions should feel united by compassion for people who suffer. This is something that can be actively addressed in concert.

Finally, sum up, we have a sense of the unity of the species today that we have never had before; and historical consciousness has been augmented by social and cultural evolution. Human existence itself calls out for reconciliation. The mission of the church is called to represent and become the agent of God's ongoing creativity that underlies world history. The immediate goal of this strategy for a Christian world mission may be envisaged as all parties passing from mutual "I-Thou consciousness" to a "We-consciousness" that may be shared by all seekers in an evolutionary world.[6]

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[5] See the program of missionary activity described by Vincent Donovan in *Christianity Rediscovered: An Epistle from the Masai* (Notre Dame, IN: Fides Claretian Press, 1978).

[6] Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Faith of Other Men* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), 129. "Any position that antagonizes and alienates rather than reconciles, that is arrogant rather than humble, that promotes segregation rather than brotherhood, that is unlovely, is *ipso facto* un-Christian." (Ibid., 131).

Conversion and Change Through the Processes of Mission and Christianization

Paul M. Collins

Change has been part of the reality of the Church since its beginning. Major changes happened as a result of activities which are usually referred to as evangelization or Christianization. Evangelization on the whole is seen as an activity intended by the institution of the Church, while Christianization may be seen as a more piecemeal incorporation of new members within the fold of the Church.[1] Either produces change in practice and belief. Sometimes the institution has actively initiated such change; often change has been recognized reluctantly; and on occasion change happens despite the institution. When change occurs, it begs the question of how far the reality of the Church after change continues to resemble the Church before it happened.

I have chosen three instances which illustrate these processes and the changes which they bring. The first example concerns the admission of the Gentiles into the Church during the first century. The second example

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[1] See: Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400–1050* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 3–5, 25.

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concerns the results of the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons in seventh century England. The final example concerns the outcomes of intentional mission in the present-day Church of England.

CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES

It is generally agreed that Jewish expectations for the last days at the time of Jesus and the Apostolic Church included the potential inclusion of the Gentiles in a general salvation which the Jews would bestow upon the world at its end.[2] Such inclusion was premised on Gentile acceptance of the Torah.[3] It seems that the Apostolic Church shared this expectation and understood its mission in the light of this calling to include the Gentiles in God's salvation.[4] However, it is clear from the *Acts of the Apostles* and the letters of St Paul that the process of including the Gentiles was far from straightforward.[5] The incorporation of non-Jews into the Church as a result of both Apostolic mission and broader processes of Christianization raised questions about the character of the body of people who sought to be disciples of Jesus of Nazareth following his death and resurrection. Was that character to be faithful to Jewish customs and laws? Or would it deviate from that inheritance? The Letters of St Paul indicate that despite Apostolic sanction of abandoning the rituals of the Torah, many remained convinced that the character of the disciples of Jesus should remain thoroughly rooted in a Jewish heritage.[6] Divergent beliefs and practices seem to have persisted well into the first century.[7] Gradually Paul's practice became the norm for the Church. This produced theological as well as practical change. The Church embraced Gentile converts by abandoning the practices of the Jews such as male circumcision and the food laws. This meant that it was much easier for Gentiles to become adherents of the new faith.[8] But a potentially dire consequence was that abandoning the ritual law might also mean abandoning the

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[2] E.g., Isaiah 2.2–3; Isaiah 11.9–12; Micah 4.1–2.

[3] E.g., Isaiah 56.2–8; and E.P. Sanders, *Paul: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 48, 52, 137–149.

[4] E.g., Galatians 3.8, 14; Romans 15.7–12.

[5] E.g., Acts 15. 1–5; Galatians 2.12; Ephesians 2.11; Colossians 4.11.

[6] Galatians 2.11–14; 1 Thessalonians 2.14–16.

[7] E.g., Titus 1.10.

[8] The practice of circumcision was abhorrent to Greeks and Romans.

morality inherent in the Jewish Tradition, something which was seen as a strength by many Gentiles.[9] In his Letters, Paul constructs an understanding which compensates for this loss. He replaces conformity to Jewish Law with an appeal to the role of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.[10] Such faith would allow the Gentiles (and believing Jews) to be saved on the Last Day of Judgement.[11] However, not all Jewish Christians were as easily convinced as St Paul that Gentiles could be included without keeping the Torah.[12] Others were afraid of where abandoning the Torah and its moral values might lead.

In response to these concerns, St Paul tentatively constructs a theology of making righteous by faith. In this way, he sought to enable the inclusion of the Gentiles within the promised salvation and maintain a high moral stance. He also construed an understanding of the death and resurrection of Christ in such a way that believers share in the mystery of dying and rising, which is a death to sin, and a being alive in righteousness.[13] Paul's construal of faith and righteousness against the background of the Second Coming and Day of Judgement created a character for the Church entirely independent of the Torah and its rules.[14]

The inclusion of the Gentiles on the basis of the rejection of the Jewish Torah radically changed the Jesus movement of the Gospels.[15] The Church was no longer rooted in Jewish Law but it became an experience led discipleship movement which in turn generated its own appeal to Tradition and religious commitments.[16] As the expectation of an imminent return of Christ receded Paul's constructs became a basis for the survival of the new movement and profoundly shaped its character. Did this new character resemble that of the Gospels? Does Paul's re-construal of following Jesus produce a paradigm for radical change to the Church?

[9] E.g. Acts 10.2; Acts 18.7.
[10] Romans 1.17; 3. 21–22, 25–26, 28; Galatians 2.16; and Sanders, Paul, 52–90.
[11] Romans 1.16; 10.5; 11.11,25.
[12] E.g. Acts 15.1; Galatians 2.12.
[13] E.g. Romans 6.3–11; 2 Corinthians 5.17.
[14] The Pauline construct would be re-worked within their own contexts and create further change by Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther.
[15] Matthew 5. 17–19.
[16] See 1 Corinthians 11.23 and 15.3.

Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons

Anglo-Saxon kingdoms emerged in a context where some of the indigenous population was Christian. However both Gildas[17] and Bede[18] are clear that the Romano-British Church failed to Christianize the incomers. Whether this is entirely true, or that the Anglo-Saxons were impervious to any attempts at conversion, we can only speculate. But we can be clear that Bede recounts a history of evangelization, which was initiated by Pope Gregory the Great.[19] Gregory's default approach to mission and conversion was aggressive and even violent.[20] However Bede is at pains to record that as a result of the work of Augustine in the kingdom of Kent, Gregory changed his mind, and produced what has become a model for Christian adaptation or inculturation. Rather than demanding the destruction of pagan places of worship, Gregory allows that they can be sanctified to Christian use.[21] We should not underestimate this change. When Constantine and Helena began building places of public worship, the model of the basilica was chosen deliberately because basilicas were not places of pagan worship.[22] Gregory's change of heart and policy allows pre-Christian culture and practice to be valued in a way which officially had not been the case. This acceptance of pagan identity, even partially, permits those who turn to Christ to do so without having wholly to reject their culture. The change which Gregory allows also honors personal freedom to choose Christ over against a much more coercive and collective approach.

[17] Michael Winterbottom, ed., *Gildas, The Ruin of Britain and Other Works* (London: Phillimore, 1978).

[18] Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 68–69.

[19] Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede*, 68–77 and Bertram Colgrave, ed., *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great, By an Anonymous Monk of Whitby* (Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press, 1968), 92–97.

[20] R.A. Markus, "Gregory the Great and a Papal Missionary Strategy," in *Studies in Church History: The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, edited by G.J. Cuming, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 29–37.

[21] Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede*, 104–115.See also: Markus, *Gregory*, 29–30, 33–36; Margaret Deansley and Paul Grosjean, "The Canterbury Edition of the Answers of Pope Gregory I to St Augustine," *Ecclesiastical History* 10 (1959): 1–49.

[22] Peter G. Cobb, "The Architectural Setting of the Liturgy" in C.M.P. Jones et al., *The Study of Liturgy*, (London and New York: SPCK, 1978, 1992), 529. Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, 10.4.37–45.

However, we should note that those invited to become converts do not necessarily wish to embrace adaptation and inculturation. Bede recounts the missionary activity of Paulinus, one of the monks of the Augustinian mission, in Northumbria.[23] A process of conversion was endorsed and encouraged by King Edwin, which may be described as consultative, non-coercive, but collective. The process resulted in mass baptisms. Despite this relatively gentle approach to conversion, the chief pagan priest Coifi is content with nothing less than the destruction of the old places of worship. It seems that for him a policy of adaptation was not radical enough, since it did not reflect the kind of change which he felt that the Gospel required. In describing Coifi's behavior Bede suggests a kind of shamanistic frenzy.[24] Coifi's reaction reminds us that top-down policies do not always connect with people at the grass roots.

Gregory's permission to adapt and accept local pre-Christian culture emerges in the processes of the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons in other ways. In the achievements of the 'Golden Age' of Northumbria, in artefacts such as the Franks Casket,[25] the standing cross at Bewcastle[26], and the Lindisfarne Gospels,[27] it is possible to witness how the Anglo-Saxons brought pre-Christian cultural forms into the service of the Gospel. The evidence of the treasures of Sutton Hoo demonstrates that the creativity and ambition of the Anglo-Saxons instantiated Gregory's change of heart.[28]

Another kind of adaptation is to be seen in an outcome of the murder of king of Oswine of Deira. Oswine was killed in 651 at the instigation of Oswiu, king of Bernicia.[29] Oswiu's wife, Eanflaed was a close relative of Oswine. Eanflaed was also the child of Edwin and his Kentish Christian wife Aethelburg. Her Christian tradition was rooted in the mission of Augustine and Gregory. Somehow, Bede does not record the details, she managed to prevent all out warfare between Deira and Bernicia, and it

[23] Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede*, 180–189.

[24] Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede*, 182–187.

[25] Lesley Webster, *The Franks Casket* (London: The British Museum Press, 2012).

[26] David M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Art from the Seventh Century to the Norman Conquest* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 72–79.

[27] Richard Gameson, *From Holy Island to Durham: the contexts and meanings of the Lindisfarne Gospels* (London: Third Millennium Publishing, 2013).

[28] A scholarly consensus suggests that the Sutton Hoo burials may be associated with King Raewald who died c. 625. The burials conform mainly to pagan practices, but some artefacts bear Christian symbolism.

[29] Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede*, 256–257.

seems there was no blood feud. Rather she persuaded her husband Oswiu that a monastery should be founded at Gilling near the border between Deira and Bernicia.[30] There the monks made amends. By ascetic lives and frequent masses, the monks would do penance for the murder and save the Northumbrian kingdoms from self-destruction. Gregory's espousal of adaptation may be seen to come to fruition through the courageous vision of Eanflaed. Gregory's understanding of masses for the departed and penance is also to be seen in this outcome.[31] When Oswiu died in 670 Eanflaed entered the monastery at Whitby and succeeded Hild as abbess in 680.[32] It is possible that the first life of Gregory the Great, written at Whitby, was produced in her time as abbess.[33]

The adaptation of Christian practice and belief which occurred as a result of the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons was rooted in seeking to hold together political reality with the Gospel. This process mirrors what had been happening to the Church since the conversion of the Emperor Constantine. Specifically, Anglo-Saxon warrior culture and its expression in the blood feud placed a profound pressure on the Gospel requirements of forgiveness and repentance. This was resolved through the founding of monastic houses to fulfil the requirements of both the Gospel and Saxon culture. Monasteries became a locus for moral responsibility and forgiveness for society and its political realities.[34] Such a radical re-construal of Christian practice and belief once again raises the question of resemblance.

[30] Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede*, 292–293. See also Christopher M. Scargill, "A Token of Repentance and Reconciliation: Oswiu and the Murder of King Oswine," in *Retribution, Repentance, and Reconciliation: Studies in Church History 40*, edited by Kate Cooper, and Jeremy Gregory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 39–41.

[31] E.g. Odo John Zimmerman, ed., *Saint Gregory the Great: Dialogues on the Miracles of the Italian Fathers* (No place: Ex Fontibus Company, 2016), 266.

[32] Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede*, 428–431.

[33] Colgrave, *Earliest*, 48. He suggests the *Life* was written after Eanflaed's death in the years between 704 and 714.

[34] Scargill, *Token*, 42–46.

Conversion Strategies in the Present-Day Church of England

The imperative behind current practices of intentional mission and evangelization in the Church of England arises from the report *Mission-Shaped Church*,[35] which proposed a number of changes. It envisaged a 'mixed economy' of traditional and informal styles of worship. Such new practices were deemed to be necessary due to the perceived decline of church attendance and membership. Around the time of millennium a spate of publications described and analyzed the predicament of the churches and suggested the inevitable demise of some churches.[36] Such a bleak prognosis challenged the churches to find ways of stemming and if possible turning around expected decline. One of the practices which has emerged as a result of seeking to enable enquirers and the lapsed to participate in worship, is the creation of an informal atmosphere for worship crafted around an opportunity for drinking and eating. These practices are popularly described as "Café Church" and "Breakfast Church".[37] They mirror current expectations of taking at least drinks into most auditoria in order to have a relaxed experience of performances of many kinds. Such informal styles are an adaptation to current secular expectations and practice. They may also relate to historic practice. Breakfast meetings in churches have been encouraged as a means of fellowship and outreach since 1920s. A more ancient precedent may be seen in the Agape Meal.[38]

The Church of England has widely embraced the practice of "Breakfast Church" and diocesan websites give encouragement and guidance for the establishing and continuing such practice.[39] However in searching for an explicit rationale of these practices, I have found very little which might be

[35] *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).

[36] E.g., Cullum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); Grace Davie et al., eds, *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures* (Aldershot and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2003).

[37] E.g., Margaret Withers, *Mission-Shaped Children: Moving Towards a Child-Centred Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2006), see chapter 4.

[38] E.g., Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, (London: A & C Black, 1945), 82–102.

[39] Diocese of Bristol, https://www.bristol.anglican.org/news/2018/05/04/breakfast-church/ (accessed 25 January 2020).

Diocese of Salisbury, https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/learning/courses/breakfast-church-5653 (accessed 25 January 2020).

deemed to be theological reflection or underpinning.[40] The Church seems content that such practices produce congregations without giving explicit guidance as to whether or how such congregations are enabled to grow in discipleship. The provision of an informal context for worship which provides children and families with a more accessible and comfortable possibility to encounter Christian faith and worship is clearly an intrinsically good opportunity. Prescribed processes of enabling these worshippers to grow in discipleship remain to be identified. The assessment of the "Breakfast Church" movement in relation to understandings of a Catechumenate process might situate it within a process of discipling, either in terms of preparation for baptism, or as a pre-Catechumenate process.[41] However in the absence of such explicit reflection and intention, Breakfast Church may be perceived as a change in worship style and ethos. Or we may see Breakfast Church as a change to the Church's understanding of making disciples altogether.

Processes of adaptation, as we have seen, have intended and unintended consequences. The desire and intention to create opportunities for an informal style of worship in the Church of England in order to facilitate the possibility of those who are un-churched or de-churched of (re)discovering worship is to be welcomed. The question remains as to how such actual changes are received and understood in the life of the Church. In comparison with expectations and practices in the mid twentieth century,[42] examples of adaptation pursued in the twenty-first challenge those expectations in regard to conversion and discipleship, albeit unintentionally. The creation of informal practices of worship reflect the culture in which the Church is situated. But such informality may be changing discipleship. Fresh Expressions such as Breakfast Church have changed the character and practice of the Church of England, and at least implicitly its beliefs. It is too soon to evaluate definitively the changes which these Fresh Expressions have brought about. Clearly a new generation of worshippers has an entirely different experience of Church and worship from those of

[40] E.g., Stephen Burns et al., eds., *The Edge of God: New Liturgical Texts and Contexts in Conversation* (London: Epworth, 2008).

[41] E.g., House of Bishops, *On the Way: Towards an Integrated Approach to Christian Initiation* (London: Church House Publishing, 1995).

[42] E.g., Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1994), 10–44.

the recent past.[43] Breakfast Church may come to be understood to have wrought as profound a change on the Church as abandoning the Torah, and mitigating the Blood Feud.

The realities of evangelization and Christianization have consistently produced changes in the life and beliefs of the Christian community. An ongoing appeal to Scripture and Tradition give an appearance of continuity. The question which emerges for me is whether textual and institutional continuities produce concrete resemblance, or if the changes wrought by Christianization over the last 2000 years have produced practices and beliefs which ultimately create a succession of dissimilarities.

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[43] Andrew Brown and Linda Woodhead, *That was the Church that was: How the Church of England Lost the English People*, (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 205–222.

Mission as Reception: Reframing Evangelism in the Church of England

Martyn Percy

A few years ago, developmental life of the Church of England crossed an unmarked line. Until recently, the best-selling Report ever produced by the Church of England had been *Faith in the City*.[1] Published in 1985, it engaged seriously with the decay and despair of our inner-city communities. It changed, amongst other things, how the church shaped the training of clergy. It shone a very public spotlight on our Urban Priority Areas (UPA's). It championed the poor. And for focusing on UPA's, the Report earned the opprobrium and scorn of the Tory right-wing press. However, the more serious edge to the Report, and often missed, was that it marked out a particularly distinctive mode of theological reflection. *Faith in the City* represented a kind of theology rooted in the Kingdom of God. One that put the people and the places they lived in before the needs and concerns of the church.

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[1] *Faith in the City: The Archbishop of Canterbury's Report on Urban Priority Areas* (London: Church House Publishing, 1985).

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The moment of *Faith in the City,* being the Church of England's best-selling Report, has, however, passed. The biggest-selling Church of England Report is now *Mission-Shaped Church*.[2] For the uninitiated, this showcases forms of congregational life that appeal to homogenous groups and that are largely Evangelical and evangelistic in character, appealing as they do to specific, identifiable, and narrow interest groups (e.g., certain kinds of youth culture, etc.). These new emerging genres of church are usually apolitical in outlook and often tend to be socially, politically, and theologically conservative, as Robert Bellah has observed.[3]

Thus, new forms of "Fresh Expression" promoted by the Church of England are normally careful to avoid anything that could be construed as theologically, politically, or socially divisive. At the same time, these groups inhabit a social and theological construction of reality in which they believe themselves to be risk-takers and edgy. But they are usually anything but this. So, for example, we rarely learn of "Fresh Expressions" for the LGBTQ+ constituency. We rarely find any "Fresh Expressions" that focus on disabilities. Or, for that matter, on serious forms of exclusion from the mainstream of our society. (That "Fresh Expression" for Asylum Seekers would be an interesting kind of ecclesial gathering).

Much of this direction in mission is driven by a reactive response to what appears to be a crisis in evangelism, and it has produced a more intense form of ecclesial polity focused on recruitment and membership as a means of stemming declines in attendance and encouraging numerical growth. The impetus for this began in earnest with Decade of Evangelism. There was little discontent and much optimism when the 1988 Conference passed a resolution approving a Decade of Evangelism. Each Province of the Communion was to develop plans for evangelism that led up the millennium. Most did, including the Church of England.[4]

But the question this poses is profound: is Anglicanism, at least in its English form, a support-based institution, or a member-based organization? Any investment in an overly narrow specifications of membership will have profound consequences for the identity and organizational shape of Anglican ecclesiology, including performative-liturgical arenas such as

[2] G. Cray et al., *Mission-Shaped Church* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).
[3] R. Bellah, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996 – New Edition).
[4] For a critique, see M. Percy, 'Being Honest in the Church' in *Being Honest to God* edited by Adrian Alker (Sheffield: St. Mark's CRC Press, 2013), 41–51.

baptism, for example. The socio-cultural expectations that are invested by those outside the worshipping congregation in baptism require constant local, pastoral negotiation between churches, clergy, and the communities they serve. The socio-theological vision of Anglican polity therefore needs to understand its purpose and roots more deeply. Anglican polity cannot afford for its ethos, identity and practice to be replaced with what I term "consecrated pragmatism".[5]

The current turn toward ecclesial organization and management focuses particular attention on how people become part of the church.[6] Specifically, it presses the question as to whether the global expressions of Anglican polity are distinctive, bounded, and overtly member-based organizations in character, seeking clarity of identity, or whether they are broader social and sacramental institutions to which a much wider public relates in a variety of ways. I am mindful that most ecclesial ecologies will contain both of these elements and will be a blend of those who feel a sense of strong attachment (often expressed as "membership"), and those whose basically affirmative relationship to the church involves a more variegated form of commitment. But my concern is with the concept of membership in Anglican polity as a whole.[7] If the church is consumed with its own managerial and organizational goals, including increasing its own numerical growth and intensifying the commitment of its members, it may lose its ethos and purpose. In contrast, I hold, that the spirit-essence of Anglican polity posits a rather more incorporative model of church; a non-member-based institution that seeks to serve society as a whole, rather

[5] For my earliest discussion of this, see Martyn Percy, 'Consecrated Pragmatism', *Anvil* 14, no. 1 (1997): 18–28.

[6] The background to the distinction between organization and institution lies in the writings of Philip Selznick. For a discussion of his work in this field, see Martin Krygier, *Philip Selznick: Ideals in the World*, (Stanford: Stanford University Law Books, 2012).

[7] On this, see Paul Avis (ed.), *The Journey of Christian Initiation: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives* (London: Church House Publishing, 2011). See also M. Percy, *Shaping the Church: The Promise of Implicit Theology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), for a detailed discussion of baptism as a broader cultural practice, which enables the child (i.e., having been "blessed" and "christened") to be received back into a local community as a recognized and publicly affirmed member of that society. For a closer ethnographic study of this phenomenon, rooted in the fishing village of Staithes on the NE coast of England, see David Clark, *Between Pulpit and Pew*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

than a member-based organization that primarily exists for its committed subscribers.[8]

In her prescient book, *The Precarious Organisation*,[9] the Dutch sociologist and ecclesiologist Mady Thung suggests that national churches in Northern Europe have come under increasing pressure in the post-war years to become self-consciously "organizations", marked by nervous activity and hectic programmes constantly try[ing] to engage their members in an attempt to reach "non-members". She contrasts the "organizational" model and its frenetic activism with the "institutional" model of the church—the latter offering, instead, contemplative, aesthetic, and liturgical models that take longer to grow and are often latent for significant periods of time, but which may be more culturally resilient and conducive than those of the activist-organizational model. Thung concluded her book by suggesting that the model being adopted by many national churches—a kind of missional "organization-activist" approach—is what drives the population away. It leads, logically, to sectarianism.

What is needed here is a braver theology, one where the church does *not* begin with itself, and its perceived deficiencies—be they membership or numerical decline—but rather looks to God as the source of mission. Understanding the nature of God requires us to see that God is ahead of mission, and both inside and outside the church. So, we need a theology that links the person and work of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) to our missiology and ecclesiology. The result of this should be that the church is more adaptive: open to being in "reception mode", and not merely mired in "broadcast mode".

John V. Taylor's classic *The Go-Between God*,[10] describes true mission as finding out what God is doing, and then trying to co-operate. Evangelism, said Taylor, is first and foremost God's work; not a sacrificial effort on the part of the churches to appease God. This *missio Dei* is our traditional way, as a church, of understanding how God acts in the world, to reconcile all things to God through Christ. This recognizes that God is omnipresent, and so can and does act in all creation—so not just within the recognized boundaries of ecclesial life (which are, in any case, like all borders,

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[8] On this, see M. Percy, 'Growth and Management in the Church of England: Some Comments', *Modern Believing*, 55, no. 3 (2014): 257–70.

[9] Mady Thung, *The Precarious Organisation: Sociological Explorations of the Church's Mission and Structure* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1976).

[10] John V. Taylor, *The Go-Between God* (London: SCM, 1974).

inherently contestable and marginal). There is ample scriptural warrant for thinking about the work of the Holy Spirit in just this way. The Jewish disciples, for example, "discovering" that God is at work amongst the gentiles—and that God had started something in those communities before any proactive mission—had got underway.

The *missio Dei* recognizes something crucial in God's ecology of mission, namely that God might choose to speak *from* the world *to* the church. The church, in other words, is not always God's starting point for conversion-related initiatives. Sometimes, God needs to convert the church and cannot do it from within. So, God works from without. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, and at work ahead of the church, and outside it. The question, always, is can the church recognize this? And can the church *receive* what the Spirit is doing beyond its boundaries; and in the act of reception, be prepared to be reformed and renewed?

The answer from the churches to such questions—say on issues of gender, sexuality, and equality—is frequently, "no". The church will not receive the progressive truth, justice, and change that the world has undertaken and adopted. The church resists the change. It resists contemporary culture. It does not believe that the Holy Spirit could be at work, independent of church leaders, in our contemporary culture; and could use that cultural change to reform and renew the church. Yet any decent missiology would always critique the notion that the church or congregation is in possession of God's power, and then simply has a range of choices on how it reifies and dispenses such power. Any proper Kingdom Theology would try and reverse this perception. Can God not bring the gospel *to* the church from outside—and through agents and channels the church would not normally regard as pure, licensed or proper? This is essentially what we should concern ourselves with. It is a simple question. What does God want to say to the church from the world? How can the church be open to and receive from what God is doing outside the church?

Here I am reminded of two very contrasting approaches to mission that I witnessed 30 ago, while I was training for ordination. Both were in a UPA in the North-East. The first project was evangelical, intense and focused on converting local people. This evangelical mission lasted just a few years—and then left. It reasoned that the lack of "results" meant the neighborhood was stony ground. There were few conversions of note, and little interest from the community, who gave the mission a wide berth.

The second mission was Franciscan, and consisted of two brothers, who arrived in the community empty-handed. They drew in the community by

asking them if they could help furnish the Brother's bare flat. The locals obliged. The first item to arrive was a chair for the unfurnished sitting room—a passenger seat taken from a written-off Ford Capri. More bits of odd furniture arrived. A kettle was found. A toaster was rustled up. The Brothers rejoiced at every gift. The Franciscans came to a community usually written off as a place of poverty and lack. Yet as the Brothers brought nothing, they affirmed their neighbors and their goodness and integrity. They were able to encounter and encourage a community that was generous and resourceful, but were frequently written off as "spongers" and "needy". In fact, the community liked to give, and they took pleasure and pride in looking after those less fortunate then themselves. That included the Brothers. The Franciscans still work there in the community.

In return, the Brothers simply offered a ministry that listened, and only then helped. The Brothers made no assumptions about what the community lacked. They went in, expecting to find God's provision in what many would have described as a moral and economic desert. They lived joyfully with their people, and did not presume any lack on the part of the community that they served. For the Franciscans, God was dwelling there— long before they arrived.[11]

Another illustration of receptive evangelism comes from an Anglican Rector in Australia, who practiced a rather progressive pastoral ministry in his outreach. Like many clergy, the Rector of this parish was more than used to being asked by new parents who had little or no relation to the church, if they would nonetheless baptise their new-born child. Most clergy would respond to this request with encouragement and catechesis. The clergy would normally insist on stipulating a course of Christian instruction for the parents—sometimes lasting months. Many clergy would also insist that the baptism took place in the context of a normal act of worship, in order to enculturate the parents, godparents, wider family, and friends into the ways of faith, say with exposure to the Eucharist.

But this Rector took a different view, and let the parents choose the time for the baptism to begin with—a Saturday, or even a Sunday afternoon, and a (so-called) "private" ceremony was countenanced. Frequently, this was the preferred option, as it suited families with their dispersed range of relatives. Then the Rector, in seeing the parents, would go further. To begin with, he handed over a copy of the Bible and a hymn book,

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[11] For fuller discussion of this dynamic and its implications for evangelism, see Darrell L. Guder, *Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology* (Grand Rapids, IL: Eerdmans, 2015).

and invited the couple to keep these copies, but choose a hymn and a Bible reading for their service. He made it clear too that they could also use other songs and readings as supplements—but they were to choose a hymn and a Bible reading that spoke to the couple about what God meant to them in the birth of this child.

Then he added this. The couple were to choose between themselves, or nominate someone else from the wider family, a person to give the short homily that accompanies the baptism. Yes, the family were going to provide the preacher. But the sermon was a simple thing, explained the Rector, and need cover only three things. First, what were their family values? What did this family stand for, and what mattered to them as virtues? Second, how were the family and friends attending the baptism proposing to raise this child in accordance with those values? And third, as they had chosen the hymn and a bible reading, how did the rookie preacher think God was going to be involved in this family now, and helping with the raising of this child? How would they collectively respond to God's commitment to this child in baptism? As the Rector reported, no family ever failed to produce a riveting, rich sermon testifying to God's blessing and providence. They became conduits of God's grace; unwitting ambassadors of the gospel message.

What is the lesson here? Instead of the church preaching *at* the family, hoping a few seeds would take root—somehow—the Rector got the family to preach for themselves. The result was that most of the seeds germinated. And many took root. As an exercise in evangelism this was clearly far more effective. And, of course, it proceeds from a far more trusting, generous-orthodox pneumatology and missiology. In this example, the church places itself in a humble position where it receives the gospel from the world. It is a risk, to be sure. But it does not fatally fall for the flaw that always assumes the church possesses the truth, and needs to pester the world with this; or that it is permanently casting itself in the role of broadcaster to a largely indifferent audience, who are not keen on reception. This theology of evangelism strikes an entirely different note. Most clergy would feel obliged to preach at the baptism and *to* the gathering. The Rector's initiative, however, ensured that the family remembered the homily for a very long time. They had preached it.

Starting with a theology of evangelism rooted in the values of the Kingdom of God and *Missio Dei* would mean the churches spending more

time listening, and less time talking[12]; more time receiving from the world, and less time pumping out propaganda. But I wonder, sometimes, if church leaders really *do* trust God, and genuinely believe in the omnipresent power of the Holy Spirit abroad in mission. They often *don't* talk and behave as though they believe this. They sound, all too often, like sacred custodians of a tribal deity in a remote village. Their God is small and tame; but it is *their* god. So transcendence becomes privatized and domesticated.

So, how does our church grow and develop? It grows like a person—through dialogue—dialogue with ourselves, and dialogue with the world around us. If we are not engaged in dialogue, we are not able to grow. The church will standstill. It will remain small. If our church really wants to recover some theological vision for national mission, and something of the urgency of evangelism, then there is only one thing to do to begin with: to be still. And then learn to listen to the world around. Then we might hear what are the actual cares and concerns of our communities. Then we might discern where God is already at work. Then we might receive from these very communities what God would have the church become. In so doing, the Church of England should move away from "broadcast mode" and learn to receive. God is abroad; already ahead of our mission.

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[12] A key text here is Vincent Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered: An Epistle from the Masai*, (London: SCM Press, 1978). The author, a missionary sent to evangelize the Masai, rediscovers his Christian faith when he learns to receive the beliefs, insights and faith imparted by the Masai.

The "Refugee Crisis" as an Opportunity for Missionary and Pastoral Conversion

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The pastoral constitution of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) *Gaudium et spes* assigned to the Roman Catholic church an essential, urgent and ongoing task: "the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel".[1] There is no doubt today that human mobility is one of those signs that begs and needs to be read from a truly Gospel perspective by all Christian churches. While the regularly mutating phenomena of migration have been a constant of human history since its beginning, it is also clear that, especially in the last decades, they have acquired for different reasons a global political preeminence.[2] The "refugee crisis" in Europe is a significant example of

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[1] Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* 4 (December 7, 1965), http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (accessed February 11, 2020).

[2] The contemporary classic of migration studies, Stephen Castles et al., *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 6th ed. (London: Red Globe Press, 2020), 10, states that since World War II the "politicization and securitization of migration" is one of the main trends and patterns of global migration.

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how most recent flows of people have influenced the social, cultural and political climate of the continent, often creating controversy and division, but also movements of solidarity and inclusion both within societies and religious communities.

This chapter will claim that, despite its ambiguity and messiness, the "refugee crisis", as a sign of the present times, represents a providential opportunity to become aware of and to further that "pastoral and missionary conversion" called for by Pope Francis in his programmatic document, the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel),[3] which is so sorely needed by all Christian churches. The Argentine pope will be the main conversation partner in this reflection for, among others, two main reasons: firstly, because through his evangelical and straightforward understanding of the meaning of the church's mission he is becoming the catalyst of what has been rightly defined by Gerard Mannion as an "ecclesiological revolution" in the making[4]; secondly, one of the consequences of his missiological and ecclesiological vision is, unsurprisingly, his special attention and sensitivity toward the vulnerable people living in the "peripheries" (EG 20), among whom migrants and refugees stand out. It is only appropriate to underline that Pope Francis' ministry with migrants and refugees does not consist only of numerous public remarks and teachings on this issue,[5] but also includes his passionate personal involvement comprising countless personal visits, meetings and concrete acts of accompaniment and material support toward vulnerable people on the move.[6]

[3] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (November 24, 2013), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. (accessed February 11, 2020). Hereafter EG.

[4] Gerard Mannion, "Francis' Ecclesiological Revolution. A New Way of Being Church a New Way of Being Pope," in *Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism. Evangelii Gaudium and the Papal Agenda*, edited by Gerard Mannion (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 93–122.

[5] The texts by Pope Francis on this subject since the beginning of his papacy in 2013 to the end of 2019 have been collected, made available online and are constantly updated by the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Vatican under the title *Lights on the Ways of Hope*. See https://migrants-refugees.va/resource-center/collection/ (accessed February 11, 2020).

[6] Here we will simply mention Francis' visits to some highly symbolic peripheries of the world indissolubly connected to migrants and refugees such as Lampedusa, Italy (July 8, 2013); Ciudad Juárez, Messico (February 18, 2016); Lesvos, Greece (April 16, 2016) with the Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I and the Orthodox Archbishop of Athens Ieronymos.

The Refugee Crisis and Missionary Conversion

Much has been written about the recent "refugee crisis" in Europe from different perspectives and it is not within the scope of this article to discuss the contours and the variety of meanings that this complex phenomenon has been taking on.[7] For our purpose it is essential to understand that this is not a crisis of material resources and spaces; or simply a question of emergency and humanitarian relief; or the only critical refugee predicament happening in the world today.[8] This is first of all about the plight of millions of people who have the courage and hope to flee from situations of war, violence, injustice, inequality, exploitation of people and resources, ecological degradation, and political and social instability. The causes of these problems are to be found in a flawed world system in which European countries that are receiving migrants and refugees are fully complicit. Hence, from a European viewpoint, it is more a crisis of human and political solidarity toward millions of people on the move, many of whom are blocked in or returned to some transit countries such as Turkey, Libya and Niger that are acting as a European border patrol thanks to agreements, which include substantial financial support, that have been struck with the European Union.[9]

Christian communities have not escaped the ethical and political dilemmas that the arrival of less than three millions refugees since 2014 has posed to the European societies.[10] It is not shocking to realize that on this issue European Christianity has split between what Ulrich Schmiedel and

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[7] For examples of interpretation of this event from a religious and theological viewpoints, see Ulrich Schmiedel and Graeme Smith, eds., *Religion in the European Refugee Crisis* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Gioacchino Campese, "'Why Are You Afraid? Have You Still No Faith?'(Mk 4:40). Becoming a Pilgrim People of God," in *Challenged by Ecumenism. Documentation of the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute – Berlin 2017*, edited by Uta Andrée et al. (Hamburg: Missionshilfe Verlag, 2018), 39–48; Gioacchino Campese, "A People of God Who Remembers. Theological Reflections on a 'Refugee Crisis'," in *Migration and Public Discourse in World Christianity*, edited by Afe Adogame et al. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2019), 215–27.

[8] The United Nation Refugee Agency (UNHCR) website lists at least 11 other situations of refugee emergency around the world, see https://www.unhcr.org/ (accessed February 11, 2020).

[9] See Maurizio Ambrosini, "Siamo Tutti un Po' Trump. Come la Gestione dell'Immigrazione Accomuna le Due Sponde dell'Atlantico," *Regno Attualità* 62, no. 4 (2017): 103–105.

[10] The UNHCR provides a regularly updated summary of the data about the refugee crisis in Europe; see https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean#_ga=2.123836426.1497874057.1580400452-382241407.1579284215 (accessed February 11, 2020).

Graeme Smith have depicted as two opposite ideal types: the "belongers", who use their faith to protect their churches and the Christian identity of their lands from the invasion of strangers, in particular from Muslims; and the "believers", who maintain that the Christian faith motivates them to be open and welcoming. As an example of this struggle, Schmiedel and Smith have indicated the case of Pope Francis whose well-known concern toward the refugees is not shared by many Roman Catholics in Europe, among them some church leaders including bishops.[11] While it would be interesting to pursue the perceptive theological insights that these two authors bring to this debate, the objective here is to show that the refugee crisis is also a missionary and ecclesial crisis insofar as it raises the issue of the missionary conversion of Christian churches whose main concern is the defense of their spaces and identities, and not of the centrality of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that has been entrusted to them to be announced and witnessed to the ends of the earth. Mannion points out that this "Gospel-centric vision" is at the heart of Francis' understanding of the church which does not exist for its own sake, but to live out the Gospel at the service of the world and the whole of humankind.[12] This is the crucial insight that different scholars who are insisting on a missionary transformation of ecclesiology have emphasized and that the controversial and challenging presence of refugees is bringing to the fore. Stephen Bevans and Robert Schroeder in what has become a classic study in the field of mission theology have put it in this way: "One of the most important things Christians need to know about the church is that the church is not of ultimate importance. [...] The point of the church is rather to point beyond itself, to be a community that preaches, serves and witnesses to the reign of God."[13] This is also the stated goal of Francis' papacy, an objective

[11] U. Schmiedel and G. Smith, "Conclusion: The Theological Takeover," Religion, 2018: 300–303. As an example of researches conducted to understand the impact of migration, and in particular of the refugee crisis, on the Christian communities in Europe, see F.-V. Anthony, "Italian Christian community vis-à-vis Immigrants. The Challenge of Evangelical Hospitality," *Salesianum* 81 (2019): 233–247.

[12] Mannion, "Francis' Ecclesiological Revolution," 99.

[13] Stephen B. Bevans – Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context. A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 7. These two authors have begun to develop a missionary ecclesiology in Stephen B. Bevans – Roger P. Schroeder, "Missionary Ecclesiology: Evangelica, Ecumenical, and Catholic Developments in 'Engaging the Nations'," in *Contemporary Mission Theology: Engaging the Nations. Essays in Honor of Charles E. Van Engen*, edited by Robert L. Gallagher – Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis 2017), 57–67; Stephen B. Bevans, "Beyond the New Evangelization: Toward a Missionary Ecclesiology for

that has been repeatedly highlighted in his discourses and homilies, and which has been beautifully expressed in *Evangelii Gaudium*: "I dream of a 'missionary option', that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation" (EG 27). The complex reality of the refugees becomes a powerful reminder to the Christian churches in Europe that their task is not to worry about maintaining a pastoral and structural status quo, but to let themselves be challenged by a world on the move in which they are called to announce and practice the Gospel. In a very apt metaphor for migrants and refugees who have to cross borders and go through gates at which they are required to exhibit their documents, Pope Francis says that the church is true to this mission only if acts as facilitator, and not referee of God's grace: "But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems" (EG 47).

The Refugee Crisis and Pastoral Conversion

A church that is going through a process of missionary conversion is a church that cannot be satisfied with "mere administration" (EG 25); a church which "seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says: 'We have always done it this way'" in order to find bold and creative ways to evangelize (EG 33); a merciful church, disciple of a merciful God, that is committed to continue the "revolution of tenderness" started by Jesus (EG 88)[14]; a church "bruised, hurting and dirty" (EG 49) that is not afraid to take to the streets because it wants to be present in the peripheries of history (EG 20); there are people such as migrants and refugees who are struggling for survival, for equality and recognition. Cardinal Blase

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the Twenty-First Century," in *A Church with Open Doors. Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium*, edited by Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 3–22. In this context, see the thoughtful comparison between Bevans and Johannes Hoekendijk offered by D. T. Irvin, "For the Sake of the World: Stephen B. Bevans and Johannes C. Hoekendijk in Dialogue," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 44, no. 1 (2020): 20–32.

[14] On mercy and tenderness as key theological terms of Pope Francis' understanding of God, mission and church, see Kurt Appel and Jakob Helmut Deibl, eds., *Misericordia e Tenerezza. Il Programma Teologico di Papa Francesco* (Cinisello Balsamo: Edizioni San Paolo, 2019).

Cupich of Chicago, following Pope Francis' lead, particularly in his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*,[15] says that the baptismal call to holiness is inseparable from the promotion of human dignity and justice especially for the poor because it is there that Christians can meet Jesus already at work.[16] Missionary and pastoral conversion in this "age of migration" is a journey of transformation of the Christian churches that embark on a pilgrimage for justice and peace, as General Secretary of the World Council of Churches Olav Fyske Tveit has often stated.[17]

The commitment to conversion has brought the Roman Catholic Church to elaborate a pastoral strategy that has been inspired by the ministry with migrants and refugees. This strategy consists of four verbs: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating.[18] These fundamental guidelines are inseparable moments of one process that begins with the essential attitude of being open and welcoming to those we consider strangers, but also with the courage of putting oneself in the position of being welcomed by a stranger; it continues with the protection of the inviolable dignity and rights of any and all human beings; it strengthens with the promotion of the integral development of the person in all his/her dimensions; and it finally leads to integration, that is, the full and active participation of that person in the life of the community. Here it is necessary to remember that integration is not a unilateral approach such as the usual term 'assimilation' suggests, but a bidirectional process in which a reciprocal recognition and learning among migrants, refugees and citizens happens, facilitating in this way the creation of a cohesive

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[15] Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate* (March 19, 2018), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html (accessed February 11, 2020).

[16] Cardinal Blase Cupich, "Promoting Human Dignity Is Our Baptismal Call," *National Catholic Reporter*, January 25, 2020, https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/cardinal-cupich-promoting-human-dignity-our-baptismal-call

[17] O. F. Tveit, "Walking Together, Serving Justice and Peace," *Ecumenical Review* 70, 1 (2018): 3–15.

[18] The four verbs have been mentioned and explained for the first time by Pope Francis in his address during the Forum "Migration and Peace" (February 21, 2017), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/february/documents/papa-francesco_20170221_forum-migrazioni-pace.html (accessed February 11, 2020). They have been reiterated by Pope Francis, Message World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018 (January 14, 2018), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20170815_world-migrants-day-2018.html (accessed February 11, 2020).

community that appreciates and values diversity. In this way migrants and refugees are not just on the receiving end of the charity and good deeds of Christian churches, but they become the subjects of this ongoing spiral of welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating human beings in societies and Christian communities. The primary implication here is that the "refugee crisis", despite its ambiguity and complexity, does not only challenge and inspire Christian churches to missionary and pastoral conversion, but could become the providential *locus* of the transformation of societies and faith communities. A transformation that is possible only if the gifts and insights that migrants and refugees bring to the table are acknowledged and included. Following Pope Francis' recognition of the poor's *sensus fidei*, that instinct of faith given by God to all believers to discern God's presence and will (EG 119, 198), it becomes imperative to stress that a missionary and pastoral conversion of Christianity in this globalized world requires the *sensus fidei migrantium*, that is, the faith, the vision, the experience, the hope and the resilience of migrants and refugees. In this sense, the refugee crisis cannot just be interpreted as a threat to Christian identity, but as a providential opportunity for European Christianity to rediscover the Gospel core of its mission.

Blessed Pierre Claverie: Holiness in a World Church

Darren J. Dias

On December 8, 2018, Pierre Claverie and 18 martyred companions were beatified in an open-air liturgy in the brilliant afternoon sun in the coastal city of Oran, Algeria. Claverie was the last of 19 Christians murdered between 1994 and 1996. The declaration of beatification called the martyrs "faithful messengers of the Gospel, humble artisans of peace, remarkable witnesses of Christian charity."[1] Indeed they were. Additionally, however, the beatification has novel significance that reflects a specific historical and cultural situation; namely the postcolonial reality of Algeria. Claverie's life and beatification are emblematic of the emergence of a "world Church," the shift from a colonial to postcolonial paradigm. The appropriation of the postcolonial paradigm by Claverie represents a significant change from a previous era in the Roman Catholic Church's relationship to Muslims, power, truth, and history and as a result its understanding of its mission. Further, in his beatification the Roman Catholic

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[1] The beatification is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yr4dATWxQrk (accessed February 13, 2020).

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Church sanctions these changed relationships holding up Claverie as an authentic witness to Christian living.

"World Church"

Karl Rahner identifies three epochs in the history of the church.[2] The first, brief epoch was the proclamation of the kerygma in its original Jewish and Semitic context. It ended with the Council of Jerusalem that began the expansion of the church into the Gentile world. This long epoch lasted until the mid-twentieth century. It encompassed the global extension of European mercantile and political interests across the continents through conquest, imperialism, and colonization. During this epoch a single normative culture (western) and religion (Christianity) was "exported" and imposed on colonized peoples.[3]

The third, and current, epoch is the "world Church." The Second Vatican Council (1962–65) marks the Roman Catholic Church's first attempt to understand and actualize itself into a world Church. The Council was global, but not monolithic. It was multi-national, multi-cultural, and multi-linguistic. An awareness of the pluri-centrality of the church in its localities is evidenced in the displacement of Latin by vernacular languages for liturgy. The actualization of the world Church cannot be attributed to genetic development, but to history and context. For example, the rise of self-determination movements and the end of official colonialism witnessed the emergence of more than 50 independent nations between 1950 and 1980. In this postcolonial context, the world Church was compelled to rethink church-state relationships, its relations with the world's religions, and its mission.

The Algerian Context

Pierre Claverie's life spans the transition from a Western-European church to the emerging world Church, specifically from the Algerian colonial to postcolonial context. The French conquest of Algeria began in 1830 and

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[2] Karl Rahner, "Towards A Fundamental Interpretation of Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 40 (1979): 716–27.

[3] Rahner, *Towards*, 717.

was complete by 1875 at the cost of nearly 900,000 Algerian lives.[4] Political and economic colonialism was coupled with a civilizing and religious mission. One colonial official of the time wrote: "the Christian conversion of Algerian Muslims [was] a duty that providence has bestowed upon France."[5] The sentiment was echoed by Archbishop Allemand-Lavigerie of Algiers, founder of the Missionaries of Africa, who in 1867 wrote to the governor of Algeria regarding their common enterprise: "Algeria is only the door opened by Providence on a barbaric continent of 200 million souls. It is especially there that we must bring the Catholic apostolate."[6]

Mystic-hermit Charles de Foucauld who lived in Algeria from 1901 until his bungled assassination by bandits in 1916, lamented a lack of support from colonial authorities "who support and encourage the Moslem religion! By doing this, they are committing a sort of suicide, for, I must say it, Islam is our enemy."[7] Foucauld opposed the systematic exploitation of Algerians for material gain because this hampered the civilizing mission and conversions.[8] With good reason, Christianity became "conjoined with French colonialism" in the Muslim imaginary.[9] This image of Christianity was liberated only with Algerian independence and nationalism.

By 1954 the *Front liberation nationale* (FLN) called for an independent Algerian state. Colonial intransigents allied with conservative Catholics in opposing Algerian independence and called for the defense of Christian civilization from the forces of Islam and communism. The discourse of defending the "Christian civilization" of *Algérie francaise* became "one of the major ideological justifications for violent French tactics."[10] In spite of the violent discourse and actions of minority groups such as *Organisation Armée secrete*, Archbishop Duval of Algiers received a friendly note from the leadership of the FLN affirming that Algerians

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[4] Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 374.

[5] Phillip C. Naylor, "Bishop Pierre Claverie and the Risks of Religious Reconciliation," *The Catholic Historical Review,* 96, no. 4 (2010): 720–42, here 723.

[6] Ibid. 725.

[7] Ibid. 726.

[8] Robert Ellsberg, *A Living Gospel: Reading God's Story in Holy Lives* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2019), 118–119.

[9] Naylor, "Bishop Pierre Claverie", 723.

[10] Darcie Fontaine, "After the Exodus: Catholics and the Formation of Postcolonial Identity in Algeria," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 33, no. 2 (2015): 97–118, here 97.

saw European settlers as "creatures of God" and condemned only the actions of the intransigent settler minority.

The Algerian Church intentionally distanced itself from the French state, opting instead to negotiate with the new Algerian authorities independently. Duval's claim "that the true 'Christian' attitude toward political changes taking place in France and Algeria was peaceful and non-violent" was met with hostility and violence by intransigent settlers, who named him "Mohammed Duval."[11] The challenge for the church in independent Algeria was to "reimagine how both the institutions and the practices of Catholicism could function without the settler population at the core of the church and without colonial state power."[12]

The *Association d'études* was established in June 1962 to assist in the de-colonization of the church. According to Denise Fontaine the first step was "a recognition of their complicity in the colonial system, and an awareness of how they were perceived by the Muslim population they lived among."[13] Bernard Picinbono articulated the new mode of presence of the church in Algeria: to announce the Gospel in a new language while trying to understand Islam; to become a community of service; and to contribute to the building of the new state. Before becoming an agent of reconciliation, the church of Algeria worked out its redemption as a "witness of love through concrete actions."[14]

Pierre Claverie of Algeria

Claverie was born into a *pieds noirs* family on May 8, 1938, in Algiers. He lived in what he would later call a "colonial bubble" that separated Algerian Muslims from European Christian settlers. In reflecting on growing up in colonial Algeria Claverie writes:

> I spent my childhood in a 'colonial bubble,' not that there were no relations between the two worlds, far from that; but, in my social milieu, I lived in a bubble, ignorant of the other, not encountering the other except as part of the *paysage* or of the décor that was implanted in my collective existence.[15]

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[11] Ibid. 102.
[12] Ibid. 100.
[13] Ibid. 108.
[14] Ibid. 110.
[15] Pierre Claverie, *Humanité plurielle* (Paris: Cerf, 2008), 137, my translation.

The indigenous Algerian was an absent-present, rendered an object with no existential value in the colonial bubble imposed by settlers. In his childhood Claverie says he was taught by the church to love his neighbor, but never that the Arab was his neighbor.[16]

On December 7, 1958, Calverie entered the Order of Preachers in France. He spent the conciliar era (1959–1967) at the Saulchoir where he was introduced to new historical perspectives and pastoral studies by the likes of M-D Chenu, Y. Congar and P-A. Liegé. Claverie completed his military service in Algeria as a chaplain from 1962 to 1963.

The Algerian War of Independence occasioned an existential crisis that began Claverie's conversation from youthful settler to anti-colonial. The "colonial bubble" was shattered by the violence of colonization.[17] Claverie writes:

> I came to my religious faith in the midst of the Algerian War […]. How could I have lived in ignorance of this world, which demanded recognition of its identity and dignity? […]. How could I so often have heard the words of Christ about loving the Other like myself, like him, and never have met that Other who was popping out like a bogeyman in our little universe?[18]

The world of the other—Algerian, Arab, Muslim—demanded recognition of its existence, identity, and dignity after over a century of its denial. In the wake of the self-affirmation of the other, Claverie writes:

> Maybe because of my ignorance of the other or that I denied his existence, one day, he jumped in front of my face. He exposed my closed universe, that was devolving into violence – but how could it have been otherwise – and he affirmed his existence.[19]

Upon his assignation to Algeria in 1967 Claverie began an intensive study of Arabic. Arabic had been classified as a foreign language in 1930, and along with other local languages, had been displaced by French in the

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[16] Ibid. 138.

[17] Pierre Claverie, "Humanity in the Plural," in Jean-Jacques Pérennès, *A Life Poured Out*, trans. Phyllis Jestice and Matthew Sherry (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2007), 258.

[18] Pierre Claverie, *Ut Unum Sint, Bulletin de la province dominicaine de France* (1981), cited in Pérennès, *A Life*, 36.

[19] Claverie, *Humanité plurielle,* 137.

process of colonial ideological domination.[20] In 1954, 90 percent of Muslims were illiterate.[21] Learning Arabic opened a world of meaning to Claverie. In his address to his Arab friends on the occasion of his episcopal ordination in 1981, Claverie declared:

> I owe to you what I am … I lived as a stranger in my youth. With you, study-ing Arabic, I have above all learned to speak and understand the language of the heart, that of brotherly friendship, where all races and religions com-mune together … this friendship is deeper than our differences … this friendship comes from God and leads to God.[22]

Paradoxically, he realized that in learning the language of the other to communicate he became acutely aware of "the abyss that separates"[23] them—language, experiences, cultures, and religions. The other had power to question the validity of one's own world and to bestow blessing.[24]

Acknowledging the Muslim and Arab context in which he lived, Claverie discovered that there were hundreds of millions of people who lived differently than he, who experienced reality differently. Claverie affirmed that each person is "a source that permits one to transgress obsta-cles, burst bubbles, go toward the other."[25] The stranger-other can become friend, but never the same. The history of colonialism taught Claverie that reality cannot be conceived of singly, but only in the plural. There is a danger in conceiving language, culture, history, religion, and even human-ity in the singular:

> to possess the truth or to speak in the name of humanity, we fall into a totali-tarianism and exclusion. No one possesses the truth, each one searches for it. Certainly there are objective truths, but they exceed everyone, and we cannot access them except in a long journey and in reconstructing, little by little, a component truth here and there, gleaning from other cultures, other

[20] Malika Rebai Maamri, *The State of Algeria, The Politics of a Post-Colonial Legacy* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 33.

[21] Naylor, "Bishop Pierre Claverie", 727.

[22] Pierre Claverie, *La semaine religieuse d'Alger* (1981) in Pérennès, *A Life*, 101.

[23] Pérennès, A Life, 66.

[24] James L. Fredericks, "Interreligious Friendship: A New Theological Virtue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies,* 35 (1998): 159.

[25] Pierre Claverie, *Petit Trait*é *de la rencontre et du dialogue* (Paris: Cerf, 2008), 47.

types of humanity, that which others have acquired, and discovered in their own journey toward the truth.[26]

Claverie recognized the church's entanglement in the colonial complex in imposing a singular vision of truth for humanity. Furthermore, he acknowledged that "the church helped to sustain a form of power in which it is difficult even today to distinguish political from religious motives" and so "has good reason to remain modest."[27]

In spite of the earnest attempts of the Algerian church to repudiate its colonial past and build a new nation in solidarity with indigenous peoples, the violence that plagued the nation infiltrated the small Christian community beginning with the murders of the Marist Henri Vergès and Assumptionist Paul-Helen St-Raymond on May 8, 1994. Claverie did not hide his disappointment:

> We know very well that there are some who consider us dangerous and harmful influences of a colonial past and incorrigible enemies of Islam … We continued nonetheless to believe that the trust and friendship of so many Algerians would protect us.[28]

As the violence escalated, Claverie became increasingly vocal against radical Islam and its singularity of religious, political, and linguistic expression that had infected Algeria. Claverie publicly witnessed to the value of friendship, diversity, and dialogue and sharply condemned the brutal violence that would eventually take anywhere from 50,000 to 200,000 lives between 1991 and 2002. On August 1, 1996, Pierre Claverie and his friend and driver Mohamed Bouchiki were assassinated when a bomb was detonated in the episcopal residence. The blood of a Roman Catholic bishop intermingled with that of his Muslim friend in a violent death together.

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[26] Claverie, *Humanité plurielle,* 141, my translation.
[27] Pierre Claverie in Pérennès, *A Life*, 151.
[28] Pierre Claverie, *Le Lien* in Pérennès, *A Life*, 192.

Saint Making in a World Church

Beatification and/or canonization is an authoritative statement of what the church believes to be holy. It is the result of an in-depth process of investigation and study at the local and universal levels. In beatification or canonization the church imposes upon the faithful the memory of a person, regionally or universally respectively.

The heroism of the martyr is remembered not only in the fact of his or her death, but also for the integrity of the life she or he led in the face of the possibility of death.[29] On the significance of saints Karl Rahner says:

> They [saints] are the initiators and the creative models of the holiness which happens to be right for, and is the task of, their particular age. They create a new style; they prove that a certain form of life and activity is a really genuine possibility; they show experimentally that one can be Christian even in 'this' way; they make a certain type of person believable as a Christian type. Their significance begins therefore not merely after they are dead. Their death is rather the seal put on their task of being creative models, a task which they had in the church during their lifetime, and their living on means that the example they have given remains in the Church as a permanent form.[30]

Lawrence Cunningham claims that saints often "break" with current understandings and practices of the faith because the "modes of doing things do not seem to be sufficient for the cultural conditions."[31] The blessed "testify to the possibility of sanctity […] germane to their time and an example that stands historically as an enriching paradigm for the future."[32]

Claverie stood in the anti-colonial paradigm necessary for an authentic world Church. Brazilian theologian Eduardo Hoornaert argues that in the postcolonial paradigm of Latin America holiness includes "a protest against Europe, the motherland of Catholicism, the type of Catholicism

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[29] Robert J Sarno, "Theological Reflection on Canonization," in *Canonization, Theology, History, Process*, edited by William H. Woestman, OMI (Ottawa: St Paul University, 2002), 12.

[30] Karl Rahner, "The Church of the Saints," in *The Theology of the Spiritual Life, Theological Investigations* III (London: Longman & Todd, 1967), 100.

[31] Lawrence Cunningham, *The Meaning of Saints* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980), 78.

[32] Ibid. 77.

that was transplanted into Latin American soil."[33] He goes on to say, "Africa and Latin America reveal Europe to itself. It is difficult for Europeans to recognise the seamy side of history without the help of this revelation and this seamy side of history shows us […] a continuing form" of colonialism.[34] Unlike previous conceptions of holiness that grew out of the context of Christendom, colonial holiness does not escape from nature and history, but is a profound presence and attentiveness to culture and commitment to history.[35]

Claverie's beatification signals the emergence of a more authentic world Church. His witness to holiness in a postcolonial context began with his recognition of the sinfulness of colonialism that erased and alienated the other. Further, Claverie was converted to the other and the world of the other as is evidenced in his long engagement in the study of Arabic. He eschewed the singular/normative understanding of culture, society, and religion. His critique of Christian forms of colonialism was echoed in his rejection of the imperialism of radical Islam. Claverie led a church that embraced its lack of state power, on the "fault-lines" of humanity, in solidarity with the victims of history. His belief in human plurality and the integrity of the other offered numerous authentic ways of being human.

Conclusion

The beatification liturgy, like Pierre Claverie himself, embodied the emerging world Church. Jean-Francois Bour notes several features.[36] First, there was the noticeable presence of Muslims, religious and civic leaders, who occupied at least one-third of the space. Has there ever been a beatification liturgy with such an impressive presence of Muslims? Second, Jean-Paul Vesco, OP, Bishop of Oran, opened the liturgy with the voice of the other by reading from Mohamed Bouchiki's last testament. This testament, clearly written by someone facing the possibility of death, is a

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[33] Eduardo Hoornaert, "Models of Holiness Among People," in *Models of Holiness*, edited by Christian Duquoc and Casiano Floristan (New York: Seabury, 1979), 42.

[34] Ibid. 42.

[35] Claudio Leonardi, "From 'Monastic' Holiness to 'Political' Holiness," in *Models of Holiness*, 53–54.

[36] Jean-Francois Bour, *Essai de relecture théologique du geste inclusif dans les celebrations des beatifications à Oran le 8 décembre 2018*, conference given at Institut de pastorale, Montreal, 7 December 2019.

witness to mercy and forgiveness.[37] Last, after the papal declaration of beatification, the traditional banner containing the portraits and names of the newly beatified was unfurled. Amongst a sea of traditional Algerian names written in blue in Arab and Latin script, representing the countless victims of the civil war, were 20 names written in blood red, those of the 19 Christian martyrs and their Muslim companion, Mohamed. While rooted in the depth of the Christian tradition, this postcolonial liturgy was emblematic of new moment of encounter, dialogue, solidarity, and friendship with the other.

The transition from the second epoch of the Church to a world Church brings with it significant change. In the postcolonial paradigm, this change is beyond the ambit of the church as it extends to the history and culture in which the church is situated. Blessed Pierre Claverie offers a model, officially recognized by the Roman Catholic Church, of how a settler community, previously engaged in the project of colonization, can respond to this change, to reimagine and reconfigure itself and to authentically witness to the Christian faith.

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[37] Mohamed Bouchicki, "Testament spirituel de Mohamed Bouchicki," *Le Lien* 391 (2014) 2, https://eglise-catholique-algerie.org/images/publications/le-lien/lien_201405_06.pdf

Changing the Church: An African Theological Reflection

Stan Chu Ilo

The African Church and the Contestations for Tradition and Innovation in the Church Today

Cardinal Sarah's influence in the World Church and in Africa offers a good starting point for exploring the meaning of change in the church and what this means for Africa. In 2015, at a workshop organized by the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), to articulate Africa's position on the synod on the family, Cardinal Sarah was insistent that Africans should speak with one clear and credible voice at that synod. The Synod on the family brought out all the divisive doctrinal and moral fault lines in contemporary Catholicism.[1] Sarah's desire for the Catholic Church to be a strong and unshakeable bastion of truth in a changing ecclesial, cultural, and historical landscape has drawn a lot of

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[1] "Ghana: Speak with One Voice, Cardinal Sarah Tells African Bishops", June 12, 2015 previously at: http://cisanewsafrica.com/ghana-speak-with-one-voice-cardinal-sarah-tells-african-bishops-on-synod/

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admiration and criticism in Africa.[2] His book, *From the Depths of our Hearts: Priesthood, Celibacy and the Crisis of the Catholic Church*, like some of his writings and interviews, has been received with mixed reactions.

Many traditionalists, particularly in the West, see Sarah perhaps as the most visible torchbearer and defender of tradition and orthodoxy against what they fear are the false reforms and changes being made in the Church by Pope Francis. This fear was captured somewhat cryptically by *New York Times* essayist, Ross Douthat, when he wondered: "How does one change an officially unchanging church? How does one alter what is not supposed to be in your power to remake?"[3] What is of concern for many African theologians is that people erroneously identify Sarah's views and writings as representative of a presumed traditionalism of contemporary African Catholicism, as if the conservative views of German Cardinal Müller are representative of the position of the European church on the contested issues in the church today. This so-called African conservatism is often presented as an attachment to a purist notion of doctrines and morality on one hand, and an ahistorical appropriation of images and structures of the church on the other. African Catholics, the thinking goes, wish to preserve the notion of an unchanging church with an unchanging truth. However, this is a very simplistic over-generalization.

Writing in *Presence-Information Religieus*, under the title, "What Interests does Cardinal Sarah Serve?" French theologian, Jocelyn Girard makes some important points about the wider implications of Sarah's theology. These points will be employed to clarify the huge difference between the theological opinion of an influential African Cardinal on the fundamental teachings of the Church on faith, morals, and church traditions; and the faith, morality and theologies of African Catholics and their dynamic actual faith in their response to the demands of the Gospel. According to Girard, when one studies the writings of Cardinal Sarah one would be right in regarding him more as "the most European of all the Cardinals" than as an African theologian. Girard also suggests that Sarah's

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[2] Lucie Sarr, "The Image Cardinal Sarah Cuts in Africa", January 29, 2020 at: https://international.la-croix.com/news/the-image-cardinal-robert-sarah-cuts-in-africa/11709?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=e-mail&utm_content=30-01-2020&utm_campaign=newsletter_crx_lci&PMID=ddbec16e7171a2ec541cb21608196675 (accessed February 17, 2020).

[3] Ross Douthat, *To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 101.

views show the success of a 'dogmatic colonialism' which was imposed on the young churches of Africa.[4]

This 'dogmatic colonialism' undermines the work of inculturation in non-Western churches and forces some many African prelates and scholars to become restorationist in their thinking. Some of these African prelates base their theologies and pastoral practices on the wrong assumption that there was once an ideal church in Europe, which had no internal differentiation and doctrinal contestations or cultural mediation. Dogmatic colonialism gives birth to opposition to the decentralization of the church and contextualization. In doing this, it negates the contextual nature of the Gospel and the church in preference for a centralized and authoritarian church that controls what happens in local churches from Rome. In addition, it promotes a normative ecclesiology, a highly structured and hierarchical church and a baroque and manualist theology. This kind of closed system approach to doctrine, theology and pastoral life effectively undermines the ability of local churches to respond to the challenges and opportunities, which confront God's people in a particular faith context using their own cultural resources.

Change in the Church in Africa: Resistance Versus Enthusiasm

Given the fact that modern European missionary work in Africa was born in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the heat of antimodernist currents in the Catholic Church, one must pay greater attention to the internal struggle today among African clerics and theologians.[5] This struggle is about fidelity and orthodoxy with regard to responding to the needs of African Christian communities and societies on one hand, while on the other hand maintaining the unity of beliefs, practices and morality within the Roman Catholic Communion.

Like other parts of the world today, Africa is caught up in the contestation about modernity and history. She is caught in the throes of ideological, economic and political processes which are not for the most part of her own making. The greater convergence to the global community and

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[4] Jocely Girard, "Quels Intérêt sert le Cardinal Sarah", *Présence: Information Religieuse*, January 21, 2020 at: http://presence-info.ca/article/opinion/quels-interets-sert-le-cardinal-sarah- (accessed February 17, 2020).

[5] See Joseph A. Komonchak, "Modernity and the Construction of Roman Catholicism", *Christianismo nella Storia* 18 (1987): 353–365.

integration into World Catholicism which was promised her in both the colonial and post-colonial phases of her history in politics and in the missionary and post-missionary phase of her history in Christianity appears to be a will-o'-the-wisp. This has generated different forms of fragmentation in Africa and social tension and unease. Many Africans are looking for 'a sacred canopy' where they can find some stability in a sea of change and uncertainty. This is why one could see a movement away from this present history in Africa by many younger African scholars and a retrogression by the older generation to the past in search of traces from it which could give some stability both in the church and in the state.

The resistance to change by some prelates and theologians in Africa harks back to the unfortunate notion of occidentalization of the church rejected by most African theologians and scholars before and after Vatican II. The notions of normative Eurocenric thinking built on an anti-modern homogenous Christianity were promoted in Africa by Archbishop Lefebvre (who later led the resistance to the changes and reforms of Vatican II). As papal Prefect for the whole of Francophone Africa before the Second Vatican Council, his influence shaped the understanding of doctrine, church, and theology in the Catholic Church and particularly in Africa among a few clerics who insist on a 'closed system' and rigid understanding of doctrine and of history. However, this understanding of orthodoxy in the Catholic Church goes back to the early times in which, to use the words of Vincent of Lérins (d. before 450), the teaching of the church was believed always (*semper*), everywhere (*ubique*) and by everyone (*ab ominibus*).

The truth is that most African Catholics wish to see a changed church in Africa because they are unsatisfied with the *status quo* in their local churches and in the social and political situation in the continent. African bishops in the early 1970s already publicly challenging the narrow understanding of orthodoxy as a total package and an ecclesiological prototype neatly packaged in Europe and unquestionably accepted by African churches. In a very prophetic statement by the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) in their 1974 document, "Co-Responsibility in the Church", African bishops committed themselves to promoting theological pluralism and contextual pastoral ministries in Africa. Some of these bishops advocated for married clergy, for a greater role for the laity and women, for Africa's own criteria and norms for religious life, and for self-reliant churches in Africa, which did not depend on Rome for doctrinal guidance and supervision and for financial sustenance.

Unfortunately, this ferment of renewal, contextualization, and prophetic engagement with the ambiguity of the African political and social context was quenched through a strong enforcement of orthodoxy and the deliberate design by John Paul II to purge the African hierarchy of progressive bishops in the 1970s and 1980s. In spite of this, African Catholics continue today to hunger for a servant church whose structures, priorities, and practices reflect the everyday faith and social condition of God's people. Many African theologians are quietly working in the margins and through theological and social networks to develop new ecclesiological images, social praxis, and new theological grammar from the actual faith and resilience of ordinary Africans.

Most African Christians are concerned today with how to get their daily bread, and how they can gain access to healthcare services and how they can find the money to send their children to school. Many African Christians are concerned about how the church could be inculturated in Africa and become a truly African church that is close to the people, immersed in the daily lives of the people and capable of speaking from the dumps of history. African Christians are concerned about sickness, diseases, epidemics, and pandemics; they face the challenges of religious competition within the Christian churches and religious persecution in those countries and regions with a Muslim majority. African Christians worry that some religious authorities in some African dioceses and religious communities still have the 'mentality of princes' condemned by Pope Francis which has created the widening social distance in many parts of Africa between church leaders and the ordinary Christians. African Christians want to see how their faith can strengthen their agency in their desire for human and cosmic flourishing and how to eliminate the use and abuse of religious authority, pseudo-religious practices, and fragmentation in their societies. Most religious people in Africa will love to see a greater collaboration and partnership between different religions and closer ecumenical relations among church denominations in Africa so that they can work together to solve the daily problems and challenges facing millions of Africans today.

How Does Change Occur in the Church?

John O'Malley argues for an understanding of changes in the church in two ways: sometimes *changes occur from above*, for instance, through a conciliar act or the acts of a pope or a prominent church leader. On the other hand, *changes can occur from below* through the lives of the saints

and everyday Christians, which could bring about a spiritual movement, a tradition of holiness, a radical Gospel-driven social movement or evangelical poverty to serve the least of the brothers and sisters. Changes from below could also happen through the birth of a religious community, which radically changes the face of the church in her structures, sense of mission and overall identity.[6] In all instances, changes occur when the church and her members embrace an open narrative of the faith, culture, conversion and the infinite capacity of the Gospel to bring treasures both new and old rather than a closed narrative (Matthew 13: 52).

Viewed in this light, changes in the church should not be understood in our times simply as the act of one pope or a cardinal. Rather, change in the Church must be seen as an organic process, which is occurring in the Church through the surprises of the Holy Spirit working in the whole people of God through the planting of many mustard seeds in the soil of faith in the rich harvest of the Lord. Those who have eyes can see these signs of changes even in these uncertain times. This demands a greater sensitivity to the footprints of God in history and to those new sites of hope particularly in our parishes and our streets, cities and hamlets. Change is taking place in the simple faith and prophetic witness of many ordinary faithful in their response to God in their faith commitments bearing the wounds and weight of sin and evil in the world. Pope Francis has been insistent in his teaching that the faith of ordinary people is the greatest source of renewal for the Church—the faith of everyday Christians is like the Church's 'immune system.'[7]

Whereas the battles over celibacy, same-sex marriage, clerical abuse, and the role of women are contested issues in the World Church, they are less divisive and contentious in Africa. These divisive arguments in the West have also effectively eliminated confronting other concerns from the margins in Africa and the Global South such as poverty, immigration, religious persecution, global health, violence against women, abuse of religious authorities, racism, ethnocentrism among other challenges. The preoccupation with the culture wars of the West by non-Westerners reflects the drama of our times where the cultural battles of the West have become the template through which many people view the challenges facing the Catholic Church. This

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[6] John O'Malley, "The Hermeneutic of Reform: A Historical Analysis", David G. Schultenover, ed. *50 Years on: Probing the Riches of Vatican II* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2015), 8.

[7] Austen Ivereigh, *Wounded Shepherd: Pope Francis and his Struggle to Convert the Catholic Church* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2019), 331.

makes it difficult for the World Church to listen to what the Spirit is saying through the spirituality and moral traditions of non-Western societies and the emergence of new Catholic spirituality and traditions of healing among others—which might help the church in her mission of bringing about a new heaven and a new earth.

Changing the Church by Embracing the Humility of God

My first proposal is that change in the church is inevitable. Cardinal Suenens noted that the church is always in transition and recalled that Pope John XXIII used to say: 'They call me a transition Pope […]. It is true, but the continuity of the Church is made up of transition after transition.'[8] However, such changes will not occur through our human achievement or the conquest of one theological party over the other. Change in the Church will not be the result of theological and regional alliances and compromises. Changes, which emerge from such alliances, do not have deep roots and enduring value. Changes in the church also will not come about simply because one is for Pope Francis or for Pope Benedict. In the past, changes occurred in the church from above; in the future changes will occur more from the base, in a diffused manner, and away from the heartland of Christianity through the surprises of the Holy Spirit and the gift of conversion of worldviews, attitudes, resistance, which will pull down our enslavement to cultures, traditions, and settled structures of power and privilege of one's race, nation, tribe, creed, gender, or social class.

The fundamental questions are: what kinds of changes does the church need in order to be faithful to her mission and reflect the will of her founder and in order that the Gospel will be proclaimed fruitfully in the world? What criteria should be used in judging any changes which emerge in the life of the church which can give the faith community a common meaning, a distinctive form? What kinds of changes are capable of reflecting some of the family traits of apostolicity, catholicity, holiness, and unity which can bring about some shared sense of Christian identity and experience?

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[8] Leon-Joseph Suenens, "Co-Responsibility: Dominating Idea of the Council and Its Pastoral Consequences" in *Theology of Renewal Vol II: Renewal of Religious Structures*, edited by L. K. Shook (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1968), 9.

What is obvious is that change in the church is not something that can be brought about simply through the current tone and divisiveness in the World Church whether by the conservative defenders of orthodoxy or progressives who are uncomfortable with what they see as a tired and old church which needs to change or die. Change in the Church will come through the humility of God. As Gerard Mannion rightly proposed:

> Not only Rahner, but Aquinas and so many before him, helped remind Christians that they need both existential and epistemological humility and therefore ecclesial humility when faced with the absolute mystery of the loving being of God that has brought us into being and charges our being with so much grandeur in each and every moment of its continuation.[9]

Ilia Delio similarly asked the important question: "What would the world be like if Christians actually *believed in* a humble God? If following a God of poverty and humility led them to abandon their opinions, prejudices and judgements so they could be more open to love others where they are, like God."[10]

I would like to rephrase this question: What would the Catholic Church look like if we believed in a humble God? What would our doctrines, structures, hierarchy, mission and teaching look like if we believe and embrace the humility of God? Some important aspects of the humility of God come to mind. The first is the aspect of God's total availability and gratuity because of God's humility. In his prayer at the consecration of the temple in Jerusalem, King Solomon wonders in words, which reflect deeply the divine condescension (*synkatabasis*): "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!" (1 Kings 8: 27). Second is that God *bends down* to creation out of humility. God *empties God's* self in order to become totally and fully available to humanity and the entire creation. God *does not hold anything* to God's self, but *gives everything away to us* and in Jesus Christ God *becomes broken and empty* in order to bring humanity and all creation into the family of God. Humility is the means and goal

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[9] Gerard Mannion, "Response: Ecclesiology and the Humility of God: Embracing the Risk of Loving the World", in *Ecclesiology and Exclusion: Boundaries of Being and Belonging in Postmodern Times*, edited by Dennis Doyle, Timothy Furry and Pascal Bazzell (Marynoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 33.

[10] Ilia Delio, *The Humility of God: A Franciscan Perspective* (Cincinnati: Franciscan Media, 2005), 31.

of God's mission in creation and God's humility means that God the changeless one, does change by becoming one like us in order to make humanity become like God.

The humility of God is also the means through which God becomes more loving and merciful because God is able to understand our human frailty. The beauty of God's humility is the lack of rigidity and stubbornness; and the creative and renewing force, which issues from this manner of divine action. Pope Francis invites the Church to embrace the humility of God. He teaches in *Evangelii Gaudium* that a church, which goes forth (24), cannot leave things the way they are (25), but must commit herself to 'a pastoral and missionary conversion.' Missionary conversion today can be facilitated through a humble Church which is not a prisoner to her past or afraid of the future or obsessed with her self-preservation (27) or with the "transmission of a multitude of doctrines to be insistently imposed" (35).

Embracing the humility of God will lead church leaders and theologians to embrace their own vulnerability and abandon the excessive attachment to power and the pride of self, which closes the doors to further insight, and refinement of one's position. Humility will help church leaders and theologians abandon the rigid defense of timeworn images and teachings and time-encrusted theological battles, which have turned every issue in our church today into a minefield of attacks and counter-attacks. Only humble and broken Christians can see the beauty and truth of God in everything especially in unusual sites and the wounded face of a world that is constantly in need of redemption. Only humble and vulnerable church leaders can connect to a wounded humanity today in our common search for something beautiful.

Conclusion

Human communities are not fossilized in time. Communities of faith are like the Word of God in its encounter with life. The biblical readers grow in the Word and the Word grows in them. In the same vein, communities of faith grow through theological reflection, and theological reflections receive sources for newness by being grounded in the communities of faith. If this is true, then it means that every theology can grow and every community of faith grows beyond the restrictions of cultures and historically conditioned factors as it moves unrelentingly into the infinite horizon of the God of love, light, and hope. The possibility of change is rooted in

the Christian logic of the perfectibility of humans who are called by God into a life, which stretches beyond the human horizon. Believing in the possibility of change in the church is an act of faith that opens the hearts of all Christians, scholars and leaders in the church to the gift of conversion, which the Spirit of Truth stimulates, in a willing heart. God always offers us more. Thus, being patient in the face of the things that we cannot change now is an act of humility in the God who can offer us more than we can ever imagine if we hold on in unfailing faith to the rich truths of the Gospel, while working with courage and hope for a better church and a better world.

The Revolutionary Power of the Church

Debora Tonelli

Change helps the Church stay young and vital. Sometimes the Church adapts to change initiated by others, sometimes she leads the change, triggering a real revolution. The Vatican II is one fundamental stage of the contemporary Church, showing that she contains in herself the seed of its own regenerations. Theologians must allow the seeds to sprout, welcoming the challenges of the contemporary world, turning them in opportunities.

Sometimes the change is a way to adapt to the contemporary world, and at other times the change requires a true revolution, within and outside the Church. In this last case, she realizes her prophetic vocation, in continuity with her Biblical roots. But what does it mean to talk of "revolution"? The first section will deal with this keyword as a political interpretation of both the Biblical tradition and the Church: biblical hermeneutics, ecclesiology and politics, in fact, converge in many respects. The revolutionary power of the Biblical tradition, the prophetic vocation of the Church in the world, the need to implement the Vatican Council, and the need to put human beings at the center of economic and political choices

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are themes of the contemporary Church and of theology in continuity with their tradition.

My thesis is that the revolutionary power of both is essential to the Biblical tradition and the Church. To remain faithful to it, the Church must take charge of this revolutionary power. Both, Biblical tradition and the Church are alive if they maintain a dialogue with the different cultures of the world and its contemporary challenges, and do not yield to the temptation to fix themselves in a static doctrine or institutional structure.

To explain the meaning of "revolution", I will refer to a recent event: the Ratzinger Prize of 2019. Awarding this prize to Paul Béré expresses the need and desire to overcome historical barriers (of colonialism) to make the Church "universal" in order to realize the Gospel message. To be "universal", the Church and theology cannot be the extension of Europe or of the Roman tradition; they need to be open to living human experience and cultures. The close dialogue between Christian tradition and cultures will enable the revolutionary power of the Church to be put into practice.

Following this path, I will focus on the contribution of African theology and on the need for an inclusive and enculturated theology, that is, the incorporation of elements of African religious reality into the process of interpreting the biblical text. The conclusion will be focused on the change of perspective needed to put human beings at the center of the Church's message, beyond a specific cultural background. A decolonized theology can suggest a good answer to this issue: the human being must again be the common goal rather than any political and economic interests and without the fear of losing the "Christianity's" monopoly.

Changing the Church: Revolutionary Power of the Biblical Tradition

The word "revolution" comes from the Latin *revolutio* meaning "a turn around" and it belongs properly to the political sphere. Discussing this idea, Aristotle refers to the changing of a constitution (1) to another and (2) to a modification of an existing constitution.[1] In the Western tradition, "revolution" belongs to the political context, but by the late fourteenth century, the word was used to refer to the revolving motion of celestial

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[1] Aristotle, *Politics*, Book V.

bodies. In general, the word is historically used for social, political, legal and/or economical radical changing.

In the context of the Christian tradition, "revolution" is sometimes used to emphasize the power of the Biblical tradition or of the Church to change the social and political status. In *Exodus and Revolution*,[2] Michael Walzer has shown the part where the Exodus served as a model for later sociopolitical revolutions. The theological tradition sustained the capacity for criticism of the Biblical tradition—the capacity to say that things could be different from the way they are, and to formulate new criteria for elaborating alternatives.[3] The biblical God is a liberator and a conqueror, both political and military.[4] His actions are absolutely earthly (14:15–15:21; Josh. 1:1–5; Judges 4–5; etc.). Besides this, the failure, on the part of the Jews, to recognize Jesus as Messiah was caused by the fact that he was not the military and political leader that many expected. However, he exercised a role of profound renewal of traditional religion (Matt. 12:1–14; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–48; John 2:13–22). Jesus criticized Jews, which had become a list of precepts. His purpose was to rediscover the deep meaning of that ancient faith. We know the consequence of his preaching.

In one way, the consequence of revolution is the innovation in the social–political–legal and/or economic space. We cannot be revolutionary without being innovative or prophetic. However, we know that the Church and believers have also acted in the other way, interpreting sacred texts in order to maintain the *status quo* or to exploit them or even prevent social changes.[5] The fact that the Biblical tradition has been used to legitimize and to delegitimize social practices and beliefs says something about its influence in social and political contexts.

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[2] Michael Walzer, Exodus and Revolution (New York: Basic Books, 1985). See also Bruce Lincoln (ed.) Religion Rebellion and Revolution. An Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cultural Collection of Essays (New York: St Martin Press, 1985).

[3] Walter Brueggemann, The Prophetic Imagination (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018).

[4] Jean-Daniel Causse, Élian Culliver and André Wénin, eds, Divine Violence: Approche exégétique et anthropolique (Paris: CERF 2011); Debora Tonelli, Immagini di violenza divina nell' Antico Testamento (Bologna: Dehoniane, 2014). See also Giles Constable et al., eds., *Il secolo XII: la "renovatio" dell'Europa cristiana* (Annali dell'Istituto storico Italo-Germanico in Trento, Quaderni, 62) (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003).

[5] Leo Lefebure and Debora Tonelli, "African American and Dalit Interpretations of the Bible: A Way of Socio-Political Innovation," Annali di studi religiosi 19, (2018): 73–93, doi: https://doi.org/10.14598/Annali_studi_relig_19201806

When the Church has acted consistently with the Biblical tradition, it has been revolutionary, innovative, prophetic, triggering processes of profound change. Among the numerous examples, I recall the legal revolution led by Pope Gregory VII.[6] He created a new system of canon law, which was the first European legal system. In so doing, the Pope triggered a real social revolution, unifying society by canon law, by the establishment of the rule of law as a firm principle and by making the Catholic Church the central juridical organization in all of Europe. As Berman underlines, this revolution was the first in a series of six Western revolutions—the later ones being the Reformation and the English, American, French and Russian revolutions. This ability to implement profound changes is perhaps one of the reasons for the Catholic Church's longevity. To push the point further, it is by its understanding of social needs, with the capacity to respond to them, that the Church expresses the revolutionary essence of the Biblical tradition. The truth of the Good News must be continually updated in response to social needs. This means that if the Church becomes an immutable institution and the Biblical tradition a sterile doctrine, they are both betraying their mission.

In the light of this consideration of the essentially revolutionary power of the Sacred Texts and the Church in history, I will now reflect on African theology. It represents, in fact, one of the most significant challenges to the renewal of the contemporary Church.

African Theology

In November 2019, the prestigious Ratzinger Prize was awarded to Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor and to the African biblical scholar Paul Béré. In his speech of thanks, Béré underlined the prophetic value of the prize for African biblical studies (ABS). On the occasion of the prize, Pope Francis pointed out that contemporary African theology is still young but dynamic and full of promise.[7] The importance of the African interpretation of the biblical tradition is twofold: on the one hand, it consists in fully realizing African culture, in continuity and in dialogue with its oral traditions. On the other hand, it urges the Church to remain alive by

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[6] Harold J. Berman, Law and Revolution. The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

[7] https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-11/pope-francis-ratzinger-prize-taylor-bere.html (accessed March 1, 2020).

trying to answer the urgent questions of our time. The dialogue and the inclusion of ABS and African theology are among the challenges of the contemporary Church, but also the source for her changing.

The African Continent is composed of 54 countries, characterized by a strong spirituality and by a variety of religions: several Christian denominations, Islam, animist religions, and traditional religions live together, which makes it difficult to map their memberships. However, this does allow us to focus on the spiritual vivacity of the African continent. Alongside this fact, we must take into account the social, political and economic challenges, to which European Christianity has no way of responding. Against this horizon, the contribution of ABS is indispensable in order to make the Bible able to speak in that specific cultural context. This means that

> ABS can be characterized both as *innovative* and *reactionary*. Innovative, because it refuses to be confined by the methodologies, ancient concerns, and principles that govern biblical studies in the "west". […] Reactionary, because its driving force is partly a critique of the inadequacy of western biblical studies in providing meaningful responses to concerns that are pertinent to African communities. A genuine ABS is therefore an amalgamation of multiple interpretive methods, approaches and foci that reflect a creative engagement of the Africa cosmological reality and the Bible.[8]

African biblical hermeneutics engages in a dialogue with the daily life of African people, with their traditions and their traditional beliefs. Christian tradition and enculturated theology are proceeding together: the challenge is to combine African culture and Christian tradition. On one side, there is the need for appropriation[9]; on the other side, there is the need to overcome the prejudice about the contribution of African culture to Christianity.[10] This means recognizing "the African reality as an authentic beginning point in the Bible's interpretative process".[11]

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[8] Andrew M. Mbuvi "African Biblical Studies: An Introduction to an Emerging Discipline", Currents in Biblical Research 15, no. 2 (2017): 149–178, 149.

[9] Musa W. Dube et al., eds., Postcolonial Perspectives in African Biblical Interpretations (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 1–28.

[10] Ukachukwu Chris, Intercultural Hermeneutics in Africa: Methods and Approaches (Nairobi: Acton, 2003), iii–iv.

[11] Mbuvi, "African Biblical Studies," 161.

Although there is no space to discuss this any further, I am interested in directing our attention to the importance of a lively theological reflection starting with real life and insisting on adequate theological answers. To do this, we need to look at the world not as an extension of Europe and her tradition, but as an interlocutor able to contribute to the understanding and implementation of the revolutionary and prophetic vocation of the Biblical tradition.

DECOLONIZED THEOLOGY

The implementation of Vatican II is necessary for the Church to change and, from my point of view, such implementation is possible when we rediscover the revolutionary power of the Biblical tradition and of the Church. I briefly explained the meaning of "revolution" which, with reference to the Church, can mean its "prophetic vocation". The example of the ABS is a way of turning our attention to one of the most important contemporary challenges, but also one of the sources of the process of change itself which is the dialogue with African culture.

The need for an enculturated theology highlights another important point: a pure Christianity does not exist and never existed.[12] This means that European Christianity is as enculturated as is Christianity elsewhere. Its "duration" does not imply its purity, but simply evokes other historical contingencies, such as the possibility of imposing her own culture on others. With the end of the official colonialism—even if it is in many respects still active—African culture needs a process of deep de-colonialization of her traditions, her culture and her beliefs. The issue at stake is not only religious, but also political, cultural and a matter of identity.[13] How is it possible for African culture to be part of the Church without making its own contribution? How is it possible to be a part of the Church if it does

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[12] As Peter Phan explains: "The conventional narrative of Christianity as a Western religion, that is, one that originated in Palestine but soon moved westward, with Rome as its final destination, and from Rome as its epicenter, spread worldwide, belies the fact that in the first four centuries of Christianity, the most active and successful centers of mission were not Europe but Asia and Africa, with Syria as the center of gravity. But even Asian Christians outside West Asia can rightly boast an ancient and glorious heritage, one that is likely as old as the apostolic age." P. Phan, "Reception of and Trajectories for Vatican II in Asia," Theological Studies 74, no. 2 (2013): 306.

[13] Kwame Bediako, Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of Non-Western Religion (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996).

not recognize my "language", my world of meanings? The translation of the Bible into African languages makes it possible to link sacred texts to social realities, arriving at an authentic African interpretation.[14] This is the first step to overcoming the colonial past: the spread of Christianity in the modern age, in fact, is strongly linked to the arrival of missionaries and therefore to the European imperialism and colonialism.[15] The African translations and hermeneutics are a means for making an interaction between reality and theology, rediscovering the revolutionary and prophetic vocation of both biblical tradition and Church, and of putting the human being in the center, beyond cultural appurtenances:

> Mothers Superior (of religious orders) are already Asian or African or Latin American. As Europeans, it is left to us to hand on the baton in life's relay race. Christianity does not need to be a powerful majority. God has not founded any nation, any factory, that must always be best, prevail, annex other factories, but it has planted seeds, minorities, which suddenly can sprout and grow […] to be minorities, but without backing away, without turning ourselves into a sect, but in all this to be a Church with a world-wide breath.[16]

Responding to this challenge does not mean losing something as Westerners. There is nothing to be afraid of what we have to let go of our Western inheritance and rise to the challenge fully to realize our Christian vocation.

[14] Gosnell L. O. R. Yorke, "Bible Translation in Africa: An Afrocentric Interrogation of the Task" in Postcolonial Perspectives, edited by Dube et al., eds., 152–170.

[15] Lamin Sanneh, Translating the message: The Missionary Impact on Culture (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989).

[16] Elmar Salman, Il respiro della benedizione. Spiragli per un ministero vivibile (Assisi: Cittadella Editrice, 2010), 47.

The Implications of Transient Migration and Online Communities for Changing the Church in Asia

Jonathan Y. Tan

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, sociologists are differentiating between "transient migration" as distinct from "permanent migration." Transient migration results from transnational forces that shape recurrent migrations rather than a singular, linear, and unidirectional migration. In a seminal essay entitled "From International Migration to Transnational Diaspora,"[1] John Lie asserts that the classic immigration narrative of a "singular, break from the old country to the new nation" is no longer tenable or viable in view of a world that is becoming increasingly global and transnational.[2] As he explains:

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[1] J. Lie, "From International Migration to Transnational Diaspora," *Contemporary Sociology* 24 no. 4 (1995): 303–306.

[2] Lie, "International Migration," 303.

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It is no longer assumed that immigrants make a sharp break from their homelands. Rather pre-immigration networks, cultures, and capital remain salient. The sojourn itself is neither unidirectional nor final. Multiple, circular and return migrations, rather than a single great journey from one sedentary space to another, occur across transnational spaces. People's movements, in other words, follow multifarious trajectories and sustain diverse networks.[3]

More importantly, Lie suggests that transnational and global forces subvert the "unidirectionality of migrant passage; circles, returns, and multiple movements follow the waxing and waning structures of opportunities and networks."[4]

It is in this context of recurrent transnational migrations that Catherine Gomes has coined the terms "transient migration" and "transient mobility" to focus attention on those "transient migrants" who are constantly on the move and not looking to stay in a particular location permanently or for the long term. In an essay that Gomes co-authored with me, she uses the terms "transient migrants," "transient migration," and "transient mobility" to refer to the global and transnational movements of people for work, study, and lifestyle including skilled professionals and students in pursuit of international education.[5]

On the one hand, the concept of transient migrants is not new. Indeed, existing theological scholarship has rightfully focused attention on *unskilled* transient migrants, especially foreign domestic workers, discussing important theological implications and pastoral responses to their lack of agency, ill treatment, and poor working conditions.[6] On the other hand,

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[3] Lie, "International Migration," 304.

[4] Lie, "International Migration," 305.

[5] Catherine Gomes and Jonathan Y. Tan, "Christianity as a Culture of Mobility: A Case Study of Asian Transient Migrants in Singapore," *Kritika Kultura* 25 (2015): 215–244, which has been revised and expanded as Catherine Gomes and Jonathan Tan, "Christianity: A Culture of Mobility," in Catherine Gomes, *Transient Mobility and Middle Class Identity: Media and Migration in Australia and Singapore* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 185–208. The discussion that follows in this section summarizes and discusses the key ideas and conclusions that are taken from our co-authored 2015 and 2017 essays.

[6] See Gemma Tulud Cruz, *An Intercultural Theology of Migration: Pilgrims in the Wilderness* (Leiden: Brill, 2010) and *Toward a Theology of Migration: Social Justice and Religious Experience* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), as and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration, and Domestic Work* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

theologians have paid comparatively little attention to the growing transient migration and mobility of educated skilled professionals and international students. In global financial hubs like Singapore and Hong Kong, transient migrants comprise a significant proportion of the population. For example, 1.6 million of the 5.4 million in Singapore, which is close to 30 percent of Singapore's population, are non-resident migrants.[7] Increasingly, transient migrant Christians are overshadowing local Christians in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan, judging from the growing number of English, Tagalog, and Bahasa Indonesia services in these places, compared to services in local languages such as Cantonese, Mandarin, or Japanese. More significantly, these educated transient migrants, whether skilled professionals or international students, comprise one of the prime drivers of the growth of World Christianity without borders as they move across cities, countries, and continents in search of the next professional job assignment or higher education prospects.

Transient Migrants in the Gulf Region of West Asia

One region that has witnessed rapid growth in transient migrant Christians is West Asia, where transient migrant professionals in the petroleum, engineering, and construction industries, as well as hospitality sectors, are contributing to the rapid growth of Christianity in a region dominated by Islam. In his March 8, 2014 article in the *Boston Globe*, columnist John L. Allen, Jr. notes that the Arab peninsula is witnessing dramatic Catholic growth rates driven, not by Arab converts, but by transient migrants who are foreign expatriates with no rights to permanent residency or citizenship: "The result is a Catholic population on the peninsula estimated at around 2.5 million. Kuwait and Qatar are home to between 350,000 and 400,000 Catholics, Bahrain has about 140,000 and Saudi Arabia itself has 1.5 million."[8] The bulk of these Catholic transient migrants are Filipino Catholics.[9] John Allen also reported that King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah

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[7] Gomes and Tan, "Christianity as a Culture of Mobility," 219.

[8] John L. Allen, Jr., "Catholicism growing in heart of Muslim World," *Boston Globe* (March 8, 2014) at: http://www.bostonglobe.com/news/world/2014/03/08/catholicism-growing-heart-muslim-world/LxIiUYwSlro7Zl6ugvVQJM/story.html (accessed February 17, 2020).

[9] See Agnes M. Brazal and Randy Odchigue, "Cyberchurch and Filipin@ Migrants in the Middle East," in Susanna Snyder, Joshua Ralston, and Agnes M. Brazal, eds., *Church in an Age of Global Migration: A Moving Body* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 187–200.

of Bahrain agreed to donate land for the construction of a Catholic church to be called "Our Lady of Arabia" for use by the Catholic transient migrants in Bahrain. Up to this point, there is no church, and Catholic transient migrants needed to go to one of the European embassies or gather in a private homes or on the grounds of foreign-owned oil companies for masses.[10] In this vein, it is interesting to note that the largest Catholic parish church worldwide is not in Europe or North America, but in Dubai—Saint Mary's Church has over 300,000 parishioners, all of whom are transient migrants working there, with 35–40 weekend masses in 12 languages and over 80,000 hosts distributed weekly. In 2014, the nightly Simbang Gabi services at Saint Mary's, leading up to Christmas drew crowds of more than 15,000 Filipino Catholics each night, resulting in the services being held in the church's parking lot.[11]

Transient Migrants and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

Unlike Dubai and Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, with the largest concentration of Catholic transient migrants, many of whom are Filipino Catholics, has not granted permission for the building of churches, whether Catholic or Protestant. In this ecclesial vacuum, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (CCRM) generally, and the Gulf Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (GCCRS) in particular, as well as individual Catholic charismatic groups such as the Filipino El Shaddai[12] Catholic Charismatic movement play a very important role for the maintenance and nourishment of the faith life of these Catholic transient migrants. The CCRM's empowerment of lay leadership and participation has kindled the fire that has led to its explosive growth across the globe generally, and in Asia in particular. According to the latest statistics compiled by the Vatican-backed

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[10] Allen, "Catholicism growing in heart of Muslim World."

[11] The information on Saint Mary's Church in Dubai come from personal communication with Filipino American theologian, Ricky Manalo, who visited this church in December 2014 and observed the weekend liturgies and Simbang Gabi celebrations.

[12] Established in 1981 by Mike Velarde, El Shaddai has experienced significant growth among Filipino Catholics in the Philippines as well as in the global Filipino diaspora, garnering a following of about 11 million within 15 years, with chapters in nearly province in the Philippines and more than 35 countries around the world. For an in-depth assessment of El Shaddai, see Katharine L. Wiegele, *Investing in Miracles: El Shaddai and the Transformation of Popular Catholicism in the Philippines* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005).

International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services (ICCRS), there are nearly 14,000 charismatic prayer groups in the Asian Church, with an estimated 15 percent of Asian Catholics involved in the CCRM. Indeed, Asia comes second after Latin America, which has an estimated 16 percent of Catholics involved in the CCRM.[13]

In the context of the Gulf States, CCRM prayer groups not only empower transient migrant lay Catholics as prophets, exorcists, healers, and lay leaders, but also enable them to transcend political borders and circumvent legal restrictions on churches and clergy presence. This has enabled transient migrant Christian lay leaders to assume leadership and responsibility for keeping the Christian faith alive and strong among their fellow transient migrant Christians in Saudi Arabia and across the Gulf region. The establishment of the GCCRS and an inaugural conference from December 7 to 9, 2008, drew 1800 leaders from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates under the banner "Let the Fire Fall Again." The sizeable numbers of leaders from the West Asia/Gulf Region is testimony to how lay Catholic Charismatic leaders have organized and nourished the faith of their Catholic transient migrants in the absence of churches and clergy to maintain the traditional Catholic sacramental life.

Transient Migrants and Online Communities: A New Way of Being Church?

In response to the restrictions on churches and clergy, transient migrant Christians in the Gulf Region of West Asia are also breaking boundaries when they create online communities and form "cyberchurch" to circumvent legal restrictions on churches and clergy. Digital presence and online communities that are shaped by social media and mediated by livestreaming and messaging apps are redefining the traditional boundaries of Christianity and paving way for a global and transnational World Christianity that is also being realized in virtual and online communities.

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[13] The statistics are taken from the Vice President of ICCRS, Cyril John's paper, "Lay Movements and New Communities in the life and Mission of the Church in Asia: Experiences from the Catholic Charismatic Renewal," which he presented at the Congress of Asian Catholic Laity, which met from August 31 to September 5, 2010 in Seoul, South Korea.

Agnes M. Brazal and Randy Odchigue's exploratory essay, "Cyberchurch and Filipin@ Migrants in the Middle East"[14] describes how Filipino transient migrants[15] create online faith communities and utilize Facebook, Youtube, livestreaming of the Sunday Eucharist and other liturgies, email lists and discussion groups, and other online resources to stay in touch with fellow Christians and practice their Christian faith in the absence of churches and clergy.[16] In other words, the transient Christian identity of these Filipino transient migrants in the Gulf Region that Brazal and Odchigue surveyed are making use of social media and other online tools to create online communities of faith that transcend geographical borders and political restrictions of churches operating in those regions. This paradigm shift toward online or virtual communities of faith is redefining what it means to be Christian, as well as demonstrating a new of being church that breaks the traditional geographical parochial boundaries and clerical leadership of such churches.

This turn by transient migrants towards online communities that define and nourish their transient migrant and Christian faith identities is not limited to transient migrants in the Gulf Region of West Asia We see the same developments in the transient migrants in Singapore and Melbourne that Catherine Gomes surveyed. For example, an Indonesian information technology in Singapore speaks of nourishing his Christian faith through online downloads and Christian Youtube channels featuring pastors and preachers.[17] Other examples illustrate how the transient Christian identity is often nourished and maintained by social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as messaging apps such Weibo, QQ, Renren and WeChat, all of which are popular with transient migrants from mainland China, as well as WhatsApp and Line for transient migrants generally.[18]

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[14] Agnes M. Brazal and Randy Odchigue, "Cyberchurch and Filipin@ Migrants in the Middle East," in Susanna Snyder, Joshua Ralston, and Agnes M. Brazal, eds., *Church in an Age of Global Migration: A Moving Body* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 187–200.

[15] Brazal and Odchigue surveyed eight Filipino transient migrants in the Gulf Region: four in Saudi Arabia who are a graphic artist, caregiver, mechanic, and engineer, and four in the United Arab Emirates who are an electrical engineer, company administrator, teacher, and machine operator respectively. See Brazal and Odchigue, "Cyberchurch," 187–188.

[16] Brazal and Odchigue, "Cyberchurch," 190–191.

[17] Gomes and Tan, "Christianity as a Culture of Mobility," 226.

[18] Gomes and Tan, "Christianity: A Culture of Mobility," 190.

Conclusion

Transient migrant Christians have profound implications for missiology and ecclesiology in the context of a rapidly changing world that is buffeted by the forces of postcolonialism, transnationalism, and globalization. The complexities of multiple belongings and hybridized identities are changing the face of World Christianity by crossing multiple boundaries and creating new convergences of multifaceted identities—personal and communal faith identities in the context of transnational networks. Historically, as a universal religion that spread throughout the world because of transnational movements, Christianity plays an important role in helping transient migrants make sense of themselves and their faith experiences in unfamiliar settings.[19]

How would a contemporary Asian ecclesiology consider the implications of the rapid growth of migration across Asia generally, and transient migration in particular, as well as the rise online communities across Asia for rethinking the shifting ecclesial landscapes in Asia today? How do we map the social and virtual geographies of Asian Christianity, especially when we look to go beyond the shape, structures, and boundaries that are established by Eurocentric ecclesiologies? When we pay attention to the daily lived experiences of Christians across Asia, what implications can we draw to help us rethink the ambits of catholicity and construct the contours of an emergent Asia ecclesiology that consider seriously the impact of Asians who are on the move, and who gather in online communities?

In the past, the grounded geography of Christianity meant that ecclesiologies have been constructed, debated, and shaped by the needs and aspirations of local faith communities who gather for worship, fellowship, and communal life in specific geographical locations. The growth of transient migrant Christian communities and online communities across Asia poses new challenges and opportunities for ecclesiologists. These transient migrants who are educated professionals and international students who move to new cities in search of jobs and educational prospects often turn to Christianity and online communities as a means of finding meaning, networking, and constructing their own faith and social identities. In addition, online communities and digital resources nourish the *resilience* of these transient migrants in the face of the many challenges of living in transience.

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[19] Gomes and Tan, "Christianity as a Culture of Mobility," 233–234.

The 1.5 million Asian Catholics in Saudi Arabia cannot legally build a church or gather for Sunday Eucharist that is presided by an ordained priest. On the other hand, they can and do turn to social media and online communities to create online communities beyond the reach of Saudi law. Without social media and online communities, there is no church in Saudi Arabia. Hence, social media and online communities are redefining the boundaries of World Christianity, reimagining ecclesiology and pastoral ministry, and posing new questions for theology on the issues of faith and identity formation in transience.

Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue

CHAPTER 22

Liturgical Renewal and Ecumenical Progress

John Borelli

We speak of "The Ecumenical Movement" as though we have consensus for its beginning, boundaries, major achievements, and agreed-upon goals and strategies. The Ecumenical Movement is definitely not over, like "The Crusades," nor generally finished through its effects remain significantly for us today, like "The French Revolution." The Ecumenical Movement not only continues; it undergoes transformations. While "restoration," as in recovery of the simplicity of the apostolic church, and "unity," as in organic unity, emerged among nineteenth-century Christian communities as common-sense goals for ending division, from the mid-twentieth century a developing consensus embraced "the restoration of unity," "full ecclesial communion," "reconciled diversity," and "differentiated consensus" as more nuanced realizations for key concepts in the ongoing course of ecumenical progress. One Catholic architect for organized ecumenical efforts, Thomas F. Stransky, CSP, often cited Robert Penn Warren's words in "Wind and Gibbon": "History is not truth. Truth is in the telling." As a ground floor participant in the Second Vatican Council, Stransky lived a

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full life of service to unity while telling ecumenical and interreligious tales from his involvement from 1960 onwards.[1]

Pope St. John XXIII wanted his council to be an outreach to other Christians among its aims, as was evident in his public announcement in January 1959: "a means of spiritual renewal, reconciliation of the Church to the modern world, and service to the unity of Christians."[2] These few words provided sufficient motivation for Augustin Bea SJ to organize behind the scenes and persuade Pope John to establish the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Pope John announced the Secretariat and other conciliar preparatory commissions on Pentecost Sunday 1960, but just before that, Cardinal Bea had instructed Msgr. Johannes Willebrands to pay a backchannel visit to Dr. Willem A. Visser 't Hooft, the first General Secretary of the World Council of Churches.[3]

The WCC, established in 1948, represented in 1960 the greatest ecumenical achievement to date, and Bea worked quickly to connect Catholic ecumenical efforts with those of the WCC. Visser 't Hooft and Bea met in Milan the following September.[4] A partnership between the WCC and the Secretariat was born; the Catholic narrative was joined to the dominant ecumenical story; and a Joint Working Group continues to the present.

There are other narratives than this North Atlantic one. Church division long preceded the Reformation. Accounts of the separation of churches in the first millennium developed into our present era with scenarios of attempted efforts at reconciliation in Eastern Europe, the Middle

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[1] John Borelli, "Thomas F. Stransky, CSP: A Scriptural Reflection in Memoriam," *Ecumenical Trends* 48, no. 10 (November 2019): 11–15. A sample of histories include: *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517–1948*, edited by Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill (Philadelphia, the Westminster Press, 2nd ed. 1968); *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, Volume 2, 1948–1968*, edited by Harold E. Fey (Philadelphia, the Westminster Press, 1970); William G. Rusch, *Ecumenism – A Movement Toward Church Unity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); Frederick M. Bliss, S.M., *Catholic and Ecumenical: History and Hope* (Lanham, MD, Rowman and Littlefield, 2nd ed., 2007); and *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*, edited by Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997).

[2] "Sollemnis Allocutio," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 51 (1959): 68–69; commented on by Thomas F. Stransky, CSP, "The Foundation of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity," in *Vatican II Revisited by Those Who Were There*, ed. Alberic Stacpoole (Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1986), 62.

[3] Willebrands reviewed these developments in his Introduction to *Peace among Christians* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), co-authored by Visser 't Hooft and Bea.

[4] Willem Adolf Visser 't Hooft, *Memoirs* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973; 2nd edition, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1987), 328.

East, and elsewhere for Christians living separately yet fully aware of Christ's urgent prayer on the night before he died, "That they all may be one." (John 17:21). Beginning in the sixteenth century, conditions in Europe and later in the Middle East allowed for the emergence of Eastern Catholic Churches, although these more often than not created hostility rather than reconciliation. New hopes emerged after Vatican II. In 1996, Catholic and Orthodox churches in Lebanon and Syria, faced with serious pastoral needs, avidly considered steps toward reconciliation and inter-communion that would break them away from the slower pace of the North Atlantic ecumenical course. Vatican officials strongly discouraged Patriarch Maximos V Hakim of the Melkite Catholic Church from making "premature unilateral decisions" with regard to sacramental sharing on the local level in the Middle East and expressed concern for unintended negative consequences.[5] Similar discouragement came from Orthodox Churches, and the initiative halted. Somewhat similar conditions in Ukraine led Pope Francis to invite the Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy to Rome in July 2019 for discussion and meetings with officials of the Roman Curia. Pope Francis emphasized that "unity in the Church will be far more fruitful, the more the understanding and cohesion between the Holy See and the particular Churches is real."[6] Progress toward full communion following the North Atlantic course may be sure and steady, but its agreed-upon constraints have frustrated one generation after the next seeking to live across ecumenical fault lines.

As the North Atlantic orientated Ecumenical Movement unfolded, even those communities of Protestants who refused to participate have benefitted from ecumenical progress. The highly individualized Catholic outreach to Evangelicals and Pentecostals has itself benefitted from a growing enthusiasm for closer working relations between churches seeking to restore institutional unity and those seeking spiritually enlivened

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[5] For example, see "A Call for Unity-The Melkite Synod," https://melkite.org/faith/faith-worship/a-call-for-unity-the-melkite-synod (accessed February 7, 2020). See also the June 11, 1997, letter in French to the Melkite Patriarch from three heads of Vatican offices laying out the lack of doctrinal agreement. An English translation is available here: https://orthodoxyindialogue.com/2017/12/12/romes-response-to-the-zoghby-initiative-by-david-brown/ (accessed February 9, 2020).

[6] "To the Member of the Permanent Synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church." http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/july/documents/papa-francesco_20190705_sinodo-chiesaucraina.html (accessed February 12, 2020).

forms of fellowship.[7] Pope Francis, the first "global south pope," brought relationships with Pentecostals with him to Rome and expanded his personal outreach to Christian communities in Italy not visited previously by his predecessors, notably communities of Pentecostals and Waldensians. Pope Francis urges accompaniment in growth through faith-sharing and common action.[8] For Christians who value liturgical celebrations as a means of nourishing the common search for unity, Pope Francis' call for greater accompaniment creates not only opportunities for prayer together but also a desire for sacramental sharing. More importantly, Pope Francis has drawn attention to "world Christianity" and the need for ecumenists to bridge the gaps among ecumenical narratives.[9]

The first of the "sixteen documents" of Vatican II, the *Constitution on the Liturgy* (*Sacrosanctum concilium*), opened by listing the desire "to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ" among several aims of the council. Gerard Austin, whose career in liturgical theology spanned the first 50 years of conciliar implementation, once observed: "In my opinion, the greatest gain of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of Vatican II was the relationship that it set up between liturgy and ecclesiology."[10] The third document promulgated by Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, affirmed that all the baptized "are honored with the name of Christian" (15). Thus, a theology of communion allowed those working on the renewal of the liturgy of the Catholic Church to underscore the fully conscious and active participation of all the faithful in the liturgical life of the church (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14) and those restoring an ecumenical ecclesiology emphasize the universal priesthood of the faithful manifest "in receiving the sacraments, in prayer and thanksgiving, in the witness of a holy life, and by self-denial and active charity" (*Lumen Gentium*, 10).

[7] Dale T. Irvin, "Specters of a New Ecumenism: In Search of a Church 'Out of Joint,'" in *Religion, Authority, and the State: From Constantine to the Contemporary World*, edited by Leo D. Lefebure (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 3–32.

[8] John Borelli, "The Dialogue of Fraternity: *Evangelii Gaudium* and the Renewal of Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue," *Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism*, edited by Gerard Mannion (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 225–228.

[9] See, for example, *World Christianity: Perspectives and Insights*, *Essays in Honor of Peter C. Phan*, edited by Jonathan Y. Tan and Anh Q. Tran SJ (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016).

[10] G. Austin OP, "Is an Ecumenical Understanding of Eucharist Possible Today?" *The Jurist* 48 (1988): 683.

Promulgated with *Lumen Gentium*, the *Decree on Ecumenism* (*Redintegratio Unitatis*) addressed current separation among Christians through the lens of a theology of communion: "For those who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are brought into certain, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church." Hence the *Decree* encouraged prayer in common as "allowable, indeed desirable that Catholics should join in prayer with their separated brothers and sisters" (8). Over 50 years later, the language sounds reserved, and even condescending, although prayer in common was something the Holy See had strongly discouraged in the past.[11] A cautionary spirit prevailed when the *Decree* advised that worship in common should not occur indiscriminately and that two leading principles always be held in tension: common worship proclaims a unity already achieved but the grace of the sacraments nourishes Christians on the way toward that unity. The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity reiterated this tension in an ecumenical directory in 1967 and 1970 and in supplemental advisories.[12] The recommendations for occasional sacramental sharing of anointing, reconciliation and the Eucharist were codified in the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* and in the 1990 *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches.* In 1993, the re-named Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity presented these principles with extraordinary pastoral care in a revised *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism.*[13]

Viewed from the past, these were generously designed norms. This statement of Pope St. John Paul II in his 1995 encyclical on ecumenism, *That All May Be One* (*Ut Unum Sint*), illustrates this generosity: "In this context, it is a source of joy to note that Catholic ministers are able, in certain particular cases, to administer the sacraments of eucharist, penance and anointing of the sick to Christians who are not in full communion

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[11] In an 1895 letter, with long-lasting effect, to the Apostolic Delegate in the United States, Pope Leo XII advised American Catholics no longer to hold "assemblies to which both Catholics and those who dissent from the Catholic Church come promiscuously to discuss together religion and morals." Letter to Archbishop Satolli, 18 September 1895, *Leonis XIII Acta* 14, 323–324.

[12] Between 1968 and 1972, the Secretariat issued four separate notes and instructions with regard to sacramental sharing. See: *Doing the Truth in Charity: Statements of Pope Paul VI, Popes John Paul I, John Paul II, and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity 1964–1980*, edited by Thomas F. Stransky CSP and John B. Sheerin, CSP (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 115–130.

[13] Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism* (Vatican City, March 25, 1993), §§ 116–136.

with the Catholic Church but who greatly desire to receive these sacraments, freely request them and manifest the faith which the Catholic church professors with regard to these sacraments. Conversely, in specific cases and in particular circumstances, Catholics too can request these same sacraments from ministers of churches in which these sacraments are valid" (45).

Pope John Paul had pointed out how *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, the 1982 convergence text of the WCC's Faith and Order Commission, with Catholic participation, represented a visible sign of "the remarkable progress already made." (17)[14] He further observed how the liturgical renewals in many churches in the Ecumenical Movements were "signs of convergence which regard various aspects of sacramental life." (45)[15] Though a consensus for liturgical worship was growing among the churches, theological consensus regarding ordained ministry and related questions remained elusive.

After the signing of the monumental *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* by representatives of the Holy See and the Lutheran World Federation in 1999, Lutherans and Catholics, particularly in Germany, wanted to move forward with joint celebrations of the Eucharist and with intercommunion, that is, with regular and reciprocal eucharistic sharing. Cardinal Walter Kasper, by then the President of the Pontifical Council, told a representative of *Lutheran World International* 2003 that "individual pastoral solutions can be found, but unlike for Lutherans, a general invitation does not seem possible yet for the Roman Catholic Church."[16]

In November 2015, when Pope Francis visited the Lutheran parish church in Rome, Anke de Bernardinis, the wife of a Roman Catholic, asked what must happen for her to receive communion with her husband regularly. Pope Francis confirmed that they share one baptism and the belief that Christ is truly present in the eucharist. He finally observed that

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[14] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper no. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982).

[15] One should point out that eight years later in 2003, Pope John Paul released his final encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, giving a more juridical approach than the pastoral approach of *Ut Unum Sint*. In *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, the pope adds a canonical judgment: "these conditions, from which no dispensation can be given, must be carefully respected, even though they deal with specific cases." (46)

[16] http://www.lutheranworld.org/lwf/index.php/cardinal-kasper-the-division-of-churches-increasingly-turning-into-a-scandal-before-the-world.html (accessed March 4, 2011).

"life is greater than explanations and interpretations" and concluded: "Speak with the Lord and go forward. I do not dare say more."[17]

Should we not, in light of the enormous progress in ecumenical relations, find more pastoral space for sacramental sharing on a regular basis and, in fact, intercommunion? A hand-picked, joint commission of Lutheran and Catholic theologians, well-experienced ecumenically, reviewed 32 ecumenical agreements between their churches on the topics of church, eucharist and ministry, in light of the *Joint Declaration*. Their report, entitled *Declaration on the Way: Church, Ministry and Eucharist* (2015), recommended that "the expansion of opportunities for Catholics and Lutherans to receive Holy Communion would be a significant sign of the path toward unity already traveled and a pledge to continue together on the journey toward full communion."[18]

Clearly Catholic practice for sacramental sharing has developed with ecumenical progress in the decades subsequent to Vatican II. Even in his argument that intercommunion is not possible, Cardinal Kasper encouraged "individual pastoral solutions" for sacramental sharing. As ecumenical progress has grown, so has the number of inter-church families and occasions when Christians attend one another's services. On the topic of intercommunion, Thomas O'Loughlin has written recently: "We are able to stand at the table because we have a relationship with Jesus the Christ through baptism – and our standing there is not a measure of our adherence to any particular doctrine, much less our willingness to be identified with a religious party, but because giving thanks to the Father is a basic

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[17] http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/november/documents/papa-francesco_20151115_chiesa-evangelica-luterana.html (accessed February 13, 2020). One should point out that Pope Francis began his reply noting with humor that he was expected to answer the question with Cardinal Kasper sitting in the front row.

[18] While the U.S. Catholic Bishops Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs and the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America unanimously endorsed the text, the U. S. Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine had not approved the text when it was submitted to both the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation. Nevertheless, on October 31, 2017, at ceremonies for the conclusion of a year of common commemoration of the Reformation, the Pontifical Council for and LWF announced that the next task of their formal dialogue commission would be "to discern in a prayerful manner our understanding on church, Eucharist and ministry, seeking a substantial consensus so as to overcome remaining differences between us." https://cnstopstories.com/2017/10/31/vatican-lutheran-federation-announce-study-on-church-eucharist-ministry/ (accessed February 13, 2020).

need recognized in our discipleship, and because we need to be resourced from the Lord for the daily taking up of our cross in following him (Mark 8:34)."[19]

As both a source of hope and a faith-filled confirmation of ecumenical progress and liturgical renewal among the churches on the varied courses of the Ecumenical Movement, intercommunion for Christians in those historically ecumenically committed communities at this late date in 2020 would greatly nourish the growth of charity among them and through them in service to the gospel. Concelebration by ministerial representatives of churches should remain a sign of full ecclesial communion or of a mutually agreed-upon interim and advanced stage toward full communion. The Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC defined full ecclesial communion as the communion in the fullness of the apostolic faith, in sacramental life, in a truly one and mutually recognized ministry, in structures of conciliar relations and decision-making and in common witness and service in the world.[20] Intercommunion will nourish Christians fully committed to proclaiming the word of God, celebrating the sacraments, and exercising the ministry of charity together, on the way to full communion, just as the church is already anticipating the kingdom of God but is not yet in its full visible realization.[21] For those who agree that they are personally and socially transformed through the effects of sacramental grace as they celebrate the sacraments, let them receive when they are together at liturgy and be encouraged to strengthen the bonds of unity, to witness the gospel, and to give wholehearted service to those in need.[22]

[19] Thomas O'Loughlin, *Eating Together Becoming One* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2019), 130.

[20] *The Church: Local and Universal* (1990), § 25 at: https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/jwg-rcc-wcc/sixth-report-of-the-joint-working-group (accessed September 2, 2020).

[21] *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper No. 214 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), 33ff.

[22] Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper No. 214, *A Catholic Response* (2019), "Conclusion."

Changing the Catholic Church's Interreligious Relationships: Irish American Pioneers at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions

Leo D. Lefebure

Planning the Parliament

Because nineteenth-century Popes Gregory XVI and Pius IX warned Catholics against the danger of religious indifferentism and condemned religious liberty and freedom of the press, there was no obvious reason to expect Catholics to accept an invitation to a Parliament of the World's Religions. Nonetheless, in spring 1890 the Presbyterian leader John Henry Barrows, one of the organizers of the World's Parliament of Religions, asked Archbishop Patrick A. Feehan of Chicago, who had been born in County Tipperary, Ireland, in 1829, for support. Barrows wrote to James Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore who had been raised in county Mayo, Ireland, inviting Catholic participation, and Gibbons responded cautiously at first. Barrows also wrote to the Secretary of State

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of the Holy See, Mariano Cardinal Rampolla, seeking papal approval of the Parliament, but he did not receive a reply from the Vatican.

The American archbishops met in Baltimore in November 1892 to consider whether the Catholic Church in the United States should support the Parliament. Michael Corrigan, the conservative Archbishop of New York City who was the son of immigrants from Ireland, strongly opposed participation; and a number of archbishops objected that this was not wise or prudent. Just when it seemed that the leaders were on the verge of declining the invitation, one elderly archbishop reportedly spoke up with biting irony: "St. Paul must have been a big fool! Why didn't he act like a respectable Catholic? Where did he get off going into the midst of the pagans? Why didn't he stay among his own?"[1] Meanwhile, the archbishops also considered a letter from Bishop John J. Keane, the first rector of the Catholic University of America, who had been born in County Donegal. Even though Keane was not present at the meeting, his letter strongly supported participation and addressed most of the archbishops' concerns:

> The Parliament of Religions is not meant for *discussion,* but for exposition […]. Again it is not in our power to hinder the Parliament from taking place. It is already certain that all the other forms of religion will be ably represented. *Can the Catholic Church afford not to be there?*[2]

In the end, the archbishops approved Catholic participation, directing Cardinal Gibbons to request Keane to organize a delegation of about 20 Catholic speakers; as the plans developed, almost all of these would turn out to have been born or raised in Ireland. The Catholic Church was the only church to approve participation in the Parliament, and it sent the second-largest delegation after the Protestants. Keane and a Catholic Irish-born layman, William J. Onahan, were the key figures shaping the Catholic delegation. They worked closely with Barrows, and Keane later commented that the organizers sought Catholic advice on the topics to be

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[1] John J. Keane, Speech to the Third International Scientific Congress of Catholics, Brussels, September, 1894, as given in Victor Charbonnel, *Congrés Universel des Religions en 1900* (Paris: Armand, 1897), 11; James F. Cleary, "Catholic Participation in the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893," *Catholic Historical Review* 55, no. 4 (1970): 585–609, here 591.

[2] Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Keane to the Most Reverend Board of Archbishops. Washington, November 12, 1892.

discussed and accepted all of the Catholic recommendations. In particular, Barrows accepted Keane's proposal that polemics be banned from the Parliament.[3]

Opening of the Parliament

On September 11, 1893, Cardinal Gibbons opened the World's Parliament of Religions with the Lord's Prayer. Together with him on the stage were Hindu Swami Vivekananda from India, Zen monk Shaku Soyen from Japan, Theravada Buddhist leader Anagarika Dharmapala from Ceylon (Sri Lanka), as well as Jewish, Protestant, Greek Orthodox, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Jain, Zoroastrian, Parsee, Daoist, Shinto, and Confucian leaders from around the world. From September 11 to 27, 1893, the World's Parliament of Religions met in the building that is today the Art Institute of Chicago, as part of The World's Columbian Exposition celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. While there had been countless interreligious conversations in earlier periods, in recorded history there had never been an interreligious gathering exactly like it on the same scale; thus this assembly is commonly taken as the starting point of the modern interreligious movement.[4]

As the local host, Archbishop Patrick Feehan offered a warm welcome to the assembly. Because Cardinal Gibbons was not feeling well, Bishop Keane read his address, in which Gibbons asserted that he was not involved in a search for religious truth because he was confident he had already found it in the Catholic Church. But he went on to reframe interreligious relations: "Though we differ in faith, thank God there is one platform on which we stand united, and that is the platform of charity and benevolence. [… N]ever do we approach nearer to our Heavenly Father than when we alleviate the sorrows of others." And he concluded his remarks in a similar vein by quoting "the pagan Cicero": "There is no way by which men can approach nearer to the gods than by contributing to the

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[3] Archives of the Catholic University of America, Keane papers, Barrows to Keane, Chicago, January 4, 1893; Cleary, "Catholic Participation," 592.

[4] Diana L. Eck, "Foreword," in *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religions, 1893,* edited by Richard Hughes Seager with the assistance of Ronald R. Kidd (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1993), xv.

welfare of their fellow-creatures."[5] Cardinal Gibbons offered a dramatic rethinking of Catholic relations to followers of other religions. Instead of condemning the errors of other religions, he emphasized the bond of charity and benevolence at a platform for common cooperation. This anticipates the call of the Second Vatican Council to cooperate with followers of other religious traditions in prudence and charity. Gibbons continued this theme on the fourth day of the Parliament in his paper on the "Needs of Humanity Supplied by the Catholic Religion," which was again read by Keane. The Cardinal described the Catholic orphanages, hospitals, and homes for the elderly as examples of practical charity inspired by Catholic faith.

One of the most remarkable and surprising interreligious developments occurred by chance one day when Archbishop Ireland and Bishop Keane were unable to attend the main session in the Hall of Columbus because the crowds were so great that they could not gain entrance. They went to the Hall of Washington instead, where the Jewish Conference was being held. The Jewish leaders spontaneously invited the Irish-born bishops to preside, and they did so![6]

Reception of the Parliament

Many reports about the Parliament in the general press both in the United States and beyond were enthusiastic. Others, however, were more critical; Barrows records hostile reactions to the parliament: "It has been stigmatized as 'Bedlam,' 'Babel,' and 'a booth in Vanity Fair'; and its promoters have been likened to Balaam and Judas Iscariot! All this shows that the parliament has important work yet to do in the world."[7] Soon there was a fierce backlash in some of the conservative Catholic press as well. The Catholic leaders were concerned about how their participation in the Parliament would be viewed by others. By appearing in public alongside a Hindu Swami, Buddhist monks, and leaders of many other religions, Catholic bishops were implicitly endorsing religious freedom in the pluralistic context of the United States. They were also opening the Catholic

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[5] James Cardinal Gibbons, "The Needs of Humanity Supplied by the Catholic Religion," in *Dawn of Religious Pluralism,* 164.

[6] Cleary, "Catholic Participation," 597.

[7] John Henry Barrows, "Results of the Parliament of Religions," in *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions,* edited by Eric J. Ziolkowski (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 137.

Church to public scrutiny on a world stage and demonstrating a degree of autonomy from the Holy See and its condemnations of religious liberty. Even though Barrows and others assumed the Vatican had approved the archbishops' decision, the American leaders had neither sought nor received approval from Roman authorities. Moreover, by collaborating in the planning of the Parliament, Keane and Onahan and the other Catholics were tacitly treating other religious leaders as equals in a collaborative venture with no missionary intent.

Observers took note. Congregational clergyman Theodore Thomas Munger thought that the most important aspect of the entire Parliament was the participation of Catholics. When describing the opening ceremony, Barrows thought that the Catholic Cardinal was "chiefly conscious of his catholicity"—spelled with a small "c."[8] A Methodist clergyman John Lee drew the logical conclusion that Catholics now endorsed religious liberty, and so he wrote to Pope Leo XIII requesting that Protestant missionaries in Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia be granted the same religious liberty.[9] In reply, Archbishop Francesco Satolli, the first Apostolic Legate of the Pope to the United States, sent Lee a copy of Pope Leo's new encyclical, *Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae* ("On the Reunion of Christendom"), which forcefully reasserted the claims of the Papacy to hold on earth the place of God Almighty.

Satolli, who came from strongly Catholic Italy, where nothing had prepared him for an event like the Parliament, became concerned that the Catholic presence gave the impression that the one true Church appeared to be simply one among many religions. He wrote a negative report to Pope Leo XIII. In France, a number of Catholic and Protestant leaders who were very enthusiastic about the Chicago Parliament began to discuss convening a similar Parliament at the Paris Exhibition being planned for the year 1900. Plans for a Parisian Parliament of Religions aroused concern in Rome.

In a letter of September 18, 1895, Pope Leo advised Satolli that if there should be another such event that was not organized by the Catholic Church, it would be better that Catholics did not participate. Pope Leo did allow that Catholics could hold their own assemblies and invite

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[8] C. H. Parra-Pirela, "Babel or Pentecost? Language-Related Issues in Catholic Involvement in the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 33/3 (2015): 69–98, here 74, 80–81.

[9] Parra-Parela, "Babel or Pentecost?": 88–89.

"dissenters" to attend.[10] While conservative critics rejoiced, John Ireland insisted that this was in no way a condemnation of parliaments of religion, but most did not accept this benign interpretation of the pope's directive. Nonetheless, Catholic participation in the Parliament was a harbinger of further changes to come. When the Parliament of the World's Religions met in Chicago in 1993, Pope Leo's advice was quietly ignored, the Holy See sent Archbishop Francesco Gioia as its representative, and Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, participated in the opening and closing assemblies and delivered an address.

The historian of religions Joseph Kitagawa argued that the 1893 Parliament marked a turning point in interreligious relations in that religious leaders began to present their own perspectives with an awareness of how they would be heard and responded to by members of other religious traditions: "In retrospect, it becomes evident that it was a new experience for many of the Parliament's planners to be self-conscious about the distinction between the 'inner meaning' and 'outer meaning' of religions."[11] Kitagawa also noted appreciatively the strong impetus that the Parliament gave to the study of comparative religion in America.[12]

Broader Horizon of History

The first Parliament was like a meteor in the sky, brilliantly illuminating the sky for a moment but then fading from sight. While the Parliament has been hailed as "The Dawn of Religious Pluralism" and the beginning of the modern interreligious movement, there was no organizational follow-up at the time. The hoped-for Parisian Parliament never took place. In the early twentieth century, American attitudes to other nations hardened, and by the 1920s tight immigration restrictions were established, limiting the number of immigrants from Asian countries with Muslim, Buddhist or Hindu backgrounds. Theologically, many Christians became more conservative and less interested in interreligious explorations. Nonetheless, in major American universities the Parliament provided an important stimulus to the academic study of comparative religious history.

[10] Cleary, "Catholic Participation," 605.

[11] Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, *The Quest for Human Unity: A Religious History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 208.

[12] Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, "The 1893 World's Parliament of Religions and Its Legacy," in *A Museum of Faiths: Histories and Legacies of the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions,* edited by Eric J. Ziolkowski (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 185–87.

The impulses released by these Irish American Catholic leaders would find resonance in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. Cardinal Gibbons' proclamation of love of neighbor as the platform on which we come near to God anticipates themes of *Gaudium et Spes: The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, and finds an echo today in the call of Pope Francis to work with interreligious partners to relieve suffering wherever we can.

Is Interreligious Dialogue Changing the Church? The Significance of the *Document on Human Fraternity*

Roberto Catalano

On February 4, 2019, Pope Francis signed a document destined to mark the history of the Catholic Church and probably of Christianity and, even more, of humanity at large. This document titled *"Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together"* represents an absolute novelty in the two-millennia-long history of the Church and this for several reasons. First of all, the papal signature was placed on a document far different from the usual papal official declarations—encyclical letters, apostolic constitutions, exhortations, and letters, *motu-proprio*. Moreover, Abu Dhabi, the venue of this act, is not only far from Vatican City (Rome), but, above all, is part of the Arabian Peninsula, which is identified as home to Islam. Second, the official act was implemented in the course of an International Interreligious Symposium on Peace, organized at the Founder's Memorial of the capital city of the United Arab Emirates. There were hundreds of participants representing not only Christianity and Islam but also other

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religious traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Judaism. But the most stunning element of the event has to be found in the fact that, for the first time in the history of the Church, a successor of Peter co-signed an official document with a leader of another religion.

The declaration was, in fact, conceived and prepared by the Holy See and al-Azhar, the famous University and Mosque in Cairo (Egypt), which to an extent represents a reference point for Sunni Islam. The Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyib and Pope Francis, by placing their signatures, marked a truly unprecedented event. There is something more to add. The co-signed document was published by the *Libreria Vaticana* in the series, which comprises the official documents of the Holy See considered as the "*magisterium*" of the Catholic Church. In the course of 2019, Pope Francis and other representatives of Roman Curia quoted the document of Abu Dhabi as a text, which has become part of the Church legacy.

All these elements seem to point to the fact that dialogue with other religions is strongly influencing the present and, consequently, the future of the Catholic Church, paving the way to a new age of cooperation and common engagement in issues involving men and women of our times: economic balance and justice, peace, and relationship with nature. Moreover, the Church seems to be committed to seek the alliance of other religions in order to form new generations with these ideals and values. Pope Francis appears fully engaged in increasingly opening up the Church toward all men and women, irrespective of their cultures and religions, faithful to the fact that we all belong to the same human family, as *Nostra Aetate* declared in 1965.

> In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship with nonChristian religions. … One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth. One also is their final goal, God. His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all men, until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light.[1]

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[1] "Nostra Aetate", at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html   (accessed   on   31st December 2019).

What happened last February—in the year of the 800th anniversary of the encounter of Francis of Assisi with the Great Sultan Al-Malik at Damietta (Egypt)—is evidence that, notwithstanding difficulties and stumbling blocks, major changes have happened in the Catholic Church, under the heading of "dialogue."

The relationship between Christians and followers of other religions has provoked internal debates within the Church ever since the beginning of the Christian community. The early tensions, which surfaced in Jerusalem and led to the first Council were, ultimately, provoked by Peter's and Paul's different approaches toward people who professed a religion different from the Jewish tradition. This original tension continued through the centuries, passing from the openness of the Fathers of the Church toward the Greek philosophy—considered to be a necessary way to reach justice, useful to attain religion[2] and capable of educating the Greek world to Christ as the Law did to the Jews—to the rigid formula "*outside the Church there is no salvation*."[3] This principle, which with a certain degree of modification and adjustment remained the reference paradigm for centuries, was still strong before the Second Vatican Council. The evidence for this is given, for example, by the fact that, prior to the Council, among the replies received in the Vatican to the questionnaire sent to the bishops to ask for the priorities to be discussed, only a handful mentioned the relationship of the Catholic Church with other faiths and cultures.

Nostra Aetate, the *Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions* came as a great change of direction at the end of the Council, after a long and often controversial debate on the issue of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the other religions. The great value of the document is not so much its theological content—which in fact is rather limited and unpretentious—but its invitation to Catholic believers "that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of

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[2] See Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* VI, 6 (67, 1), Early Christian Writings (http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/clement-stromata-book6.html) (Accessed on 30 January 2020). Ploux, 232.

[3] This formula can be found in several Fathers of the Church starting from Origen who was the first one who formulated it in the third of his *Homilies on Joshua*. The sentence in its formulation, which has been handed over through the centuries can be found in Cyprian of Carthago, *Epistulae,* [CSEL 3/2] (edited by W. Hartel), apud C. Giroldi Filium Bibliopolam Academiae, Wien 1871, 465–842 quoted in Sandra Mazzolini, *Chiesa e salvezza. L'*extra Ecclesiam nulla salus *in epoca patristica*, (Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 2008), 294.

other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual, and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men."[4] These words already speak of a new attitude toward other religious traditions since "the Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth, which enlightens all men."[5] It is the first strong and clear positive answer to a widespread demand, which had found, as early in 1942, in a thought-provoking formulation in Simone Weil's proposal: to believe that men and women may be saved outside the visible Church calls for a revision of all the elements of our faith. Failing this, Weil argued, the Church may not be able to accomplish its mission.[6]

It can be argued that the *Document of Abu Dhabi* somehow represents evidence of what has been accomplished in the last almost six decades after *Nostra Aetate* was published. In fact, the *Document* represents something completely innovative, something, which can be compared only to the initiative of John Paul II when, in 1986, he called for representatives of different religions to assemble in Assisi in order to pray for peace. What happened on that day could not be framed under any existing theology of religion, as it was a gesture destined to remain unique, something which was absolutely different from everything that had happened before in the relationship between the Catholic Church and people of other religions.[7] Likewise, the drafting and signing of a common document, showing the same commitment to work for peace, is something which goes far beyond expectations and even if it raises questions, it also serves to defeat stereotypes and prejudices, which are deeply rooted in people's minds, from the religious and cultural point of view.[8] The document is not a diplomatic protocol, which has been drafted and signed for a specific event. Rather, it

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[4] See "Nostra Aetate", § 2.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Simone Weil, *Letter to a priest* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 28. First published by Routledge & Kegan, 1953. Original title: *Lettre à un religieux* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951).

[7] See Giuseppe Ruggieri, *Ritrovare il Concilio* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2012), 108–112.

[8] See Giuseppe Costa, "Le religioni ed. il coraggio dell'alterità: la Dichiarazione congiunta di Abu Dhabi," *Aggiornamenti Sociali*, 70, no. 3 (2019): 181–188, 182.

carries a strategic value and a significance projected toward the future.[9] Pope Francis himself has underlined that the document offers a strong and clear witness that it is possible for Christians and Muslims to meet and work together also in our historical context when religions—and Islam in a very special way—are considered to be causes for conflicts rather than solutions.

> In an epoch such as our own, in which there is a strong temptation to see an ongoing conflict between the Christian and Islamic civilizations, and also to consider religions as a source of conflict, we wished to give an ulterior, clear and decisive sign, that it is indeed possible to come together; it is possible to respect one another and to dialogue; and that, even in the diversity of cultures and traditions, the Christian and Islamic worlds appreciate and uphold common values: life, family, religious sense, honor for the elderly, the education of young people, and still others.[10]

What has to be avoided is the misleading temptation to consider the document only from a social point of view. The key to its correct interpretation is given by the fact that Christians and Muslims believe in God and, if they are convinced that God is the creator of everything and everyone, the natural consequence is that we are all part of the same human family. That is why it is very significant that, though the two ideas of God—the one of Islam and the one of Christianity—are not the same, still the document starts by invoking God's name.

> In the name of God who has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and who has called them to live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known the values of goodness, love and peace.[11]

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[9] See "Documento sulla fratellanza. Mons. Coda (teologo): 'Peso spirituale e politico che può rivestire'" interview by Maria Chiara Biagioni, SIR (Servizio Informazione Religiosa), 8 February 2019 at (https://agensir.it/chiesa/2019/02/08/documento-sulla-fratellanza-mons-coda-teologo-peso-spirituale-e-politico-che-in-prospettiva-puo-rivestire/). (Accessed 31 December 2029).

[10] Pope Francis, *Audience in St. Peter's Square,* 6 February 2019 at (http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20190206_udienza-generale.html) (accessed on 31 December 2019).

[11] *Document on Human Fraternity and World Peace*, 4 February 2019 at (http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html) (accessed on 31 December 2019).

It is well known that this initiative and, especially, the fact that the pope co-signed a common memorandum with a Muslim leader have provoked strong criticism from many corners, along with great appreciation from others. In this context, Pope Francis clearly and strongly stated that "from the Catholic point of view the Document does not move one millimeter away from the Second Vatican Council […] was crafted in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council."[12] Criticism was voiced by people who could not see that, as already foreseen by Benedict XVI, *Nostra Aetate, Gaudium et Spes,* and *Dignitatis Humanae* were probably the Council documents which, slowly and silently but consistently, provided the greatest and most unexpected contribution to the modern Catholic Church.[13]

In the context of the historical *Document* co-signed by Pope Francis and al-Tayiib at Abu Dhabi, one must acknowledge and appreciate the prophetic role of Paul VI who truly grasped the signs of times and effectively expressed his conviction that "the Church must enter into dialogue with the world in which it lives. It has something to say, a message to give, a communication to make."[14] He also disclosed the very nature of "dialogue," which he defined as an "internal drive of charity which seeks expression in the external gift of charity."[15] Above all Paul VI had the courage to show the way with concrete gestures destined to pave the way toward a new season of the relationship between the Christianity and other faiths. He established the *Secretariat for Non-Christians*[16] and started meeting the faithful from other religious traditions. In Mumbai, during his first overseas trip, while meeting representatives of different religions present in India, apart from appreciating the religions born on the Indian soil, he became the first pope to quote a Holy Book of another religion.

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[12] Pope Francis, *Press Conference on the return flight from Abu Dhabi to* Rome, 5 February 2019 at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/february/documents/papa-francesco_20190205_emiratiarabi-voloritorno.html (accessed 31 December 2019).

[13] See Benedict XVI, *Address to Parish Priest and Clergy of Rome*, Vatican City, 14 February 2013 at: http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2013/february/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20130214_clero-roma.html (accessed on 31 December 2019).

[14] Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*, § 65. (http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam.html) (accessed 31 December 2019).

[15] Ibid., § 64.

[16] Established on Pentecost Sunday, 1964 by Pope Paul VI in 1988 it was renamed *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* (PCID).

Yours is a land of ancient culture, the cradle of great religions, the home of a nation that has sought God with a relentless desire, in deep meditation and silence, and in hymns of fervent prayer. Rarely has this longing for God been expressed with words so full of the spirit of Advent as in the words written in your sacred books many centuries before Christ: "From the unreal lead me to the real; from darkness lead me to light; from death lead me to immortality." (*Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* 1, 3, 28)[17]

Furthermore, Paul VI drew a road-map for the decades to come setting out *Nostra Aetate* into a constructive agenda open to the collaboration of everyone. He invited, in fact, people of different faiths to "come closer together, not only through the modern means of communication," but by "coming together with our hearts, in mutual understanding, esteem and love." His invitation was for meeting each other not "not merely as tourists, but as pilgrims who set out to find God—not in buildings of stone but in human hearts." Religions do not meet religions, rather "man must meet man, nation meet nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God." The road was clear: "in this mutual understanding and friendship, in this sacred communion, we must also begin to work together to build the common future of the human race."[18]

What happened in Abu Dhabi this year has to be seen in continuity with the great intuitions that had appeared in *Ecclesiam Suam*, a document which for decades seemed to be almost forgotten but which, instead, continues giving life to new openings of the Church toward humanity. The courage of Pope Francis' choices in dialogue can be read and understood only in this line of continuity and constant development where "dialogue" is not an option but the very essence of the Church and a duty for all those who believe, and for all women and men of goodwill.

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[17] Paul VI, Address to the Members of Non-Christian Religions, Bombay 3rd December 1964. (http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1964/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19641203_other-religions.html), (accessed on 31 December 2019).

[18] Ibid.

That's Gonna Leave a Mark: A Saint, a Sultan, and How Friendship Does (or Doesn't) Change the Church

Jason Welle O.F.M.

Given the Gospel dictum, "I no longer call you slaves … I call you friends" (Jn 15:15), the relative absence of friendship as a central ecclesiological category in modern theology must be considered surprising. In one of the most-discussed surveys of approaches to ecclesiology, Avery Dulles's *Models of the Church,* friendship barely enters.[1] More recently, theologians have begun to probe friendship as an ecclesiological theme. In addition to some recent graduate theses,[2] theologians like Steve Summers have

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[1] The concept emerges as a foil in one model: the tension between considering the Church primarily as a network of friendly fellowship or as a Mystical Communion with a basis in God. Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974); rev. and exp. ed. (Garden City: Image, 1987).

[2] Richmond Dzekoe, "The Church in Friendship: A Touchstone for Theological Reflection on Ecclesial Communication in a Digital Age" (Ph.D., St. Thomas University, 2017); Anne-Marie Ellithorpe, "Towards a Practical Theology of Friendship" (Ph.D., The University of Queensland, 2018); Jonathan Sammut, *Love of Friendship in the Christian Life* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2019), a revised version of a thesis at the University of Malta.

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prompted new consideration of the importance of friendship for the Church's self-understanding. Summers understands friendship as "a particular love that can be expressed in a hospitable community,"[3] and argues that a hospitable Church can heal a wounded society through friendship. True friendship is rare, so a Church infused with friendship offers a counter-cultural opportunity as a social good. "Friendship offers the best in human relationality […] a relationship capable of engendering wider social capital."[4]

The assumption that friendship can help heal society is not distinctively Christian; one may note parallels with classical Muslim philosophers on the point.[5] The forthcoming reflections, however, do not concentrate on how the Church affects the world, but on how friendships between Christians and non-Christians change the Church.[6] Much theological work remains to be done regarding interreligious friendship. Some Muslims have recently contested whether a Muslim can befriend a Christian,[7] and the Christian who searches for justification to reject the possibility of interreligious friendship has little trouble finding sources.[8]

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[3] Steve Summers, *Friendship: Exploring its Implications for the Church in Postmodernity* (London and New York: T & T Clark/Continuum, 2009), 156.

[4] Summers, *Friendship*, 193.

[5] Both Miskawayh (d. 1030) and al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023) see the public good that results from stable, reciprocal friendships; this esteem for friendship leads Marc Bergé to describe al-Tawḥīdī as a humanist. Marc Bergé, *Pour un humanisme vécu: Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī* (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1979), 318; cf. Nuha A. Alshaar, *Ethics in Islam: Friendship in the Political Thought of al-Tawḥīdī and his Contemporaries* (New York: Routledge, 2015), esp. 47, 159–60, 207, 225.

[6] In this discussion of changing the Church, I intend no engagement with ecclesiological debates about continuity or discontinuity; my point of departure is simply that insofar as individual Christians are members of the body of Christ, the moral and spiritual evolution of those individuals constitutes a change to the Church.

[7] The 2017 controversy in Indonesia surrounding the former governor of Jakarta, a Christian, revolved around this point. More broadly, the Salafi trend of *al-walāʾ wa al-barāʾ* likewise seems to pre-empt any friendship between Muslims and Christians. For discussion, see Uriya Shavit, "Can Muslims Befriend Non-Muslims? Debating *al-walāʾ wa-al-barāʾ* (Loyalty and Disavowal) in Theory and Practice," *Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations* 25, no. 1 (2014): 67–88.

[8] A quotation from the young Joseph Ratzinger illustrates the tension, though through the language of brotherhood rather than friendship. "In contrast to the Stoics and the Enlightenment, *Christianity affirms the existence of the two different zones [of ethical behaviour] and calls only fellow believers 'brothers'.*" *Christian Brotherhood* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1966), 81.

Such arguments notwithstanding, facts remain stubborn: the history of Muslim-Christian relations offers no shortage of close friendships between followers of these two paths. The surge in interest in interreligious dialogue today renders the question of interreligious friendship prescient. "Friendship" typically denotes a stable relationship marked by mutual concern for each other's welfare and an intimacy that shapes the character of each individual involved.[9] Interreligious dialogue does not necessarily foresee the establishment of such a bond. Even a brief glance at some of the literature treating the nature, purpose, and types of interreligious dialogue shows that the mutual desire to learn typically emerges as a constitutive element, but whether or not the exchanges that enable this learning result in lasting bonds can pass by nearly unaddressed.[10] While such works do not reduce dialogue to an activity that is primarily cognitive or didactic, one notices nonetheless that the importance of an enduring relationship between participants can take a backseat to the learning that takes place in the encounter itself.[11]

Against this backdrop, one may recall a flurry of activity in 2019 commemorating the 800th anniversary of a famous interreligious encounter: the meeting between Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) and al-Malik al-Kāmil (d. 1238).[12] Many look back to this moment as a flicker of light in a dark epoch, when two men transcended the mutual enmity that then characterized Muslim-Christian relations. Pope Francis has repeatedly invoked the

[9] Bennett Helm, "Friendship," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* at: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/friendship. (accessed February 17, 2020).

[10] For one example—containing a bibliography with many similar examples—see Catherine Cornille, "Conditions for Interreligious Dialogue," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Interreligious Dialogue,* edited by Cornille (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 20–33; two essays in that same volume—the pieces authored by Marianne Moyaert and Jeannine Hill Fletcher—do, however, emphasize growth in friendship.

[11] One recent collection, in which theologians reflect on how interfaith friendships have shaped their own thinking, is refreshing in this light: James L. Fredericks and Tracy Sayuki Tiemeier, eds., *Interreligious Friendship after* Nostra Aetate (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[12] Michael A. Perry, the Franciscan Minister General, penned a letter for the anniversary (*Quae placuerint Domino,* Rome, 7 January 2019), and the order produced a commemorative book in three languages (available for download at ofm.org) containing selected writings, passages from Church documents on interreligious dialogue and Islam, and an interfaith prayer service. I note in sadness that the anniversary fell 1 month before the untimely passing of Gerard Mannion, a devotee of St. Francis, to whom the present collection of essays is dedicated.

encounter in connection with his own outreach to Muslims.[13] In thanking the Franciscans for their work to commemorate it, Pope Francis observes that the friars' presence among Muslims is rooted in "bonds of friendship" with Muslims.[14]

The path to these bonds of friendship began in a way that, to observers at the time, must have looked like ordinary events in the course of a crusade. After the friars' General Chapter in 1219, Francis of Assisi announced his intention to travel to Egypt. He accompanied a contingent of crusaders through the Nile Delta, where he stayed in the Christian camp outside Damietta.[15] Shortly thereafter, the crusaders undertook an aggressive assault that resulted in many crusader losses, and Francis seized the ensuing period of truce as a window of opportunity. He then convinced Cardinal Pelagius to permit him and one of his companions to cross the battle lines and engage the sultan at his court. The specifics of what happened next belong to hagiography, but Latin sources agree that Francis was taken into the Muslim camp and was granted an audience with the sultan, who respectfully listened to him. The sources report Francis's desire to preach conversion to the sultan and Francis's desire for martyrdom, meaning that the result of the encounter must be reckoned as a double failure. No Muslims became Christian and Francis's efforts to win the martyr's palm bore no fruit. To appreciate the sting of these unfulfilled expectations, one may recall the playful words of the apologist G. K. Chesterton, who described the episode as part of an ironic tragedy and comedy called "*The Man Who Could Not Get Killed*."[16] His martyrdom prevented, Francis emerged with a bill of safe passage and returned to Italy shortly thereafter.

As already suggested, historically reliable details about the encounter escape us. We know neither whether the two met on one occasion or

[13] Pope Francis, Address at the Meeting with Priests, Religious, Consecrated Persons, and the Ecumenical Council of Churches (Rabat, 31 March 2019); Address at the Meeting with the Moroccan People, the Authorities, with Civil Society, and with the Diplomatic Corps (Rabat, 30 March 2019); Homily at Holy Mass (Abu Dhabi, 5 February 2019); Address at the Interreligious Meeting at the Founder's Memorial (Abu Dhabi, 4 February 2019); Address to Participants in the International Peace Conference (Cairo, 28 April 2017).

[14] Pope Francis, Letter to Father Michael Anthony Perry, O.F.M. (9 February 2019).

[15] For a frequently cited account of the siege of Damietta, see Joseph P. Donovan, *Pelagius and the Fifth Crusade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950), 38–68; for a revisionist account, especially regarding Francis, see James M. Powell, *The Anatomy of a Crusade 1213–1221* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 157–173.

[16] Gilbert K. Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), 148.

several, nor who else was present, nor how they handled translation, nor exactly how long Francis stayed in the Muslim camp. We can point to the effects of the journey on Francis: he became capable of imagining a non-proselytizing mission among Muslims. The *Regula non bullata,* which failed to garner papal approval, describes two ways that the friars could go on mission:

> One way is not to engage in arguments or disputes but to be subject to *every human creature for God's sake* and to acknowledge that they are Christians. The other way is to announce the Word of God, when they see it pleases the Lord, in order that [unbelievers] may believe in almighty God […] and be baptized and become Christians […].[17]

This first way of mission, being subject to Muslims, was a major shift in the notion of mission not just for Francis, but for the Latin Church.[18] The prevalent options were proselytism, militancy, or a combination thereof[19]; Francis's suggestion transformed what Christian presence among Muslims could look like. How can one account for such a radical shift in Francis's thinking?

One simple solution presents itself: Francis was transformed by friendship. In the short time he enjoyed the sultan's hospitality, their personal connection left a mark on him. Some scholars suggest that Francis and al-Kāmil immediately developed a strong bond and that Francis carried back to Italy a particular affection for his friend, praying for al-Kāmil until the end of his days.[20]

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[17] Francis of Assisi, *Earlier Rule (Regula non bullata),* in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents,* ed. R.J. Armstrong et al. (Hyde Park: New City, 1999), 1:74 (ch. 16). Italics indicate an allusion to 1 Pt 2:13.

[18] The seminal study remains Jan Hoeberrichts, *Francis and Islam* (Quincy: Franciscan Press, 1997).

[19] Edoardo Scognamiglio's poignant expression captures a frequent dynamic in mission among Muslims in the period: "Spesso, capitava che la conversione delle popolazioni sconfitte fosse posta fra i termini della pace e, già prima del confronto violento tra cristiani e musulmani, la missione *ad gentes* s'intrecciò tragicamente con la missione *contra gentes.*" *Francesco e il Sultano: Lo «Spirito d'Assisi» e la profezia della pace* (Padua: EMP, 2011), 36.

[20] The strongest formulation of this hypothesis is that of Michael F. Cusato, "The Loneliness of Francis of Assisi: The Reception by the Franciscan Order of the Encounter of Francis with the Sultan in the First Half of the 13th Century," *The Muslim World* 109, no. 1–2 (2019): 14–68; for others, see Scognamiglio, *Francesco e il Sultano,* 67; Giulio Basetti-Sani, "Chi era il vecchio famoso che incontrò San Francesco a Damietta?," *Studi Francescani* 82 (1985): 209–244.

This hypothesis accords with some conceptions of interreligious dialogue. Pope John Paul II told the bishops of North Africa that Muslim-Christian dialogue is in the first place a question of friendship and he frequently returned to the theme of friendship in meetings with Muslims. We have already noted comments by Pope Francis along the same line. This modern interest in interreligious friendship thus adds another reason to consider Francis of Assisi a man ahead of his time, a precursor of an emerging age, someone radically new. I must, however, sound a note of caution. I cannot claim that Francis and al-Kāmil were friends, unless we surrender to Facebook's crusade to dilute the meaning of a once-beautiful word. Without entering into an excursus on Aristotelian categories of *philia,* the true challenge to the putative friendship between them is the element of mutual transformation. Friends shape each other. Friendship leaves a mark.[21] Historically, we have no doubt that Francis's voyage to Egypt shaped him and transformed his understanding of the mission of the friars,[22] but we lack evidence that Francis shaped the sultan.[23] If their relationship was not mutual—if meeting Francis meant little to al-Kāmil—then one could not argue that friendship effected the change in Francis. Francis's trip to Egypt—Francis's encounter with Muslims—changed the Church, but a friendship in Francis's life did not change the Church.

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[21] Acknowledging debates about the nature of friendship, Bennett Helm nonetheless includes mutuality and intimacy involving transformation as constitutive elements. Some authors consider this so obvious that it need not be argued; Alexander Nehamas's philosophical analysis of friendship is a case in point. Nehamas mentions in passing several times that friendship shapes the character of each person, but his first serious discussion of this occurs in his book's final chapter, addressing the negative capacity of friends to form each other for evil and vice. Helm, "Friendship"; Nehamas, *On Friendship* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

[22] Note that one need not attribute the change in Francis solely to encountering al-Kāmil. Francis's time in the Muslim camp was his first exposure to Muslims; for a hypothesis regarding the shift in Francis's attitude due to contact with Muslims, see Cusato, "The Democratization of Prayer: What Francis of Assisi Learned at Damietta (1219)," *Collectanea franciscana* 85 (2015): 59–82.

[23] To be clear, the problem is evidentiary: without evidence demonstrating that meeting Francis somehow affected al-Kāmil's religiosity, governance, or behavior, I cannot claim that they were friends. Absence of evidence, however, is not evidence of absence; they may have formed an immediate mutual bond that escaped the interest of Arab chroniclers. For discussion, see Jason Welle, "Arabic Sources for the Encounter between the Saint and the Sultan: Fakhr al-Fārisī's Famous Adventure with Francis, or Lack Thereof," *Collectanea* (The Franciscan Center of Oriental Studies, Musky, Cairo) 48–49 (2015–2016): 7–75.

A reader might now assume that the choice of the historical moment at the core of this essay was ill-advised. I contend that the opposite is true. If an encounter lacking the full dynamics of friendship can yield the positive change for the Church that Damietta 1219 yielded for Francis of Assisi,[24] then encounters marked by friendship—that bond without which no one would want to live[25]—could have even stronger and more beneficial effects. Ecclesiologists highlighting friendship rightfully think first about friendships among Christians, the community of Christ's disciples.[26] The time has come to consider also the next step, the importance of interreligious friendship as an element of Christian life that promotes a fuller understanding of the nature and mission of the Church in the world.[27] The call for interreligious friendship is not a call for coffee talk. It is a call to do what a person of virtue does: seek out other persons of virtue as friends, act for their welfare, and walk with them in mutual support, mutual critique, and mutual encouragement toward religious and ethical growth. The Church benefits from disciples whose friends have spurred them to evangelize joyfully and practice mission by attraction; the Church likewise benefits—and increases her relevance to today's pluralistic world—when friendships with Muslims spur Christian disciples to give faithful and peaceful witness.

[24] Limited space forecloses the argument that Francis's new notion of mission constitutes *positive* ecclesial change; suffice it to note that it grants additional freedom without precluding other missionary options, enjoys papal and widespread episcopal approval today, and is cited favorably by many promoters of dialogue.

[25] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1155a.

[26] One sees this in Summers' focus on the Eucharist; recall as well Dulles's model of the Church as "community of believers" (in the expanded edition), which Dulles frames as a "bridge model" that incorporates the strengths of the others and must be understood in light of them.

[27] James L. Fredericks rightly notes the importance of interreligious friendships among the drafters of *Nostra Aetate*. "Introduction," in *Interreligious Friendship after* Nostra Aetate, 1.

Three's Company in Interfaith Dialogue: A Protestant Modus for Engagement with Those from Other Faiths

Nicolas G. Mumejian

Missionary, ecumenist, theologian, and social ethicist are but a few of the many hats Lesslie Newbigin wore throughout his life. Born in Britain in 1909, Newbigin spent 40 years in South India as a missionary.[1] It is during this time that he would establish himself as a preeminent ecumenist.[2] Newbigin views dialogue as an exchange of livelihood which entails personal interaction. In *The Open Secret* he discusses the manner in which dialogue becomes more than words; dialogue, he suggests, is the development of relationships that necessitates both conversations about each other's faith convictions and opportunities to work together for a

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[1] Geoffrey Wainwright, *Lesslie Newbigin: a Theological Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), v.

[2] For further and more detailed biographical information I recommend Geoffrey Wainwright's book that is cited above. Due to the constraints of this paper I will not expound upon the details of his life that are not immediately pertinent this paper.

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variety of common causes.[3] In such an encounter with one another, trust is developed in ways that mere conversation lacks. Dialogue then is not evangelism but the pre-text to evangelism. I will endeavor to flush out the unique qualities of dialogue that makes it different from evangelism in the proselytizing sense.

The first question is this: why should Christians engage interreligious dialogue with the religious other? Is the witness of the Church through individuals and the corporate body not enough? Newbigin claims:

> Anyone who knows Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior must desire ardently that others should share that knowledge and must rejoice when the number of those who do is multiplied. Where this desire and this rejoicing are absent, we must ask whether something is not wrong at the very center of the church's life.[4]

Part of the Church's witness that declares Jesus as Lord and Savior entails the necessary role of dialogue. Lack of dialogue then inflates suspicion of the Church's focus and calls into question the individual's integrity as a follower of Christ.[5] Dialogue is action and, Newbigin writes, discipleship in practice is

> […] a matter of action, and not only thought. Therefore, I think that the most fruitful kind of interfaith dialogue is one in which people of different faiths or ideologies who share a common situation and are seeking to meet ordinary human needs, are enabled to share the insights which their different beliefs give them for contemporary action. It is in this situation of active discipleship, where we cannot take refuge in established formulations of doctrine but have to probe new and unexplored territory, that we learn what it means to trust Jesus as the way, the truth and the life and as one who can lead us into truth in its fullness.[6]

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[3] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: an Introduction to the Theory of Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995), chapter 10, part 1.

[4] Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 127.

[5] In his book *Household of God* Newbigin relates the sin of the individuals as being then the sin of the Church. For Newbigin the dichotomy between individual Christian and community of Christians is blurred to the point that to refer to one is to refer to both.

[6] Lesslie Newbigin (ed. Geoffrey Wainwright), *Signs Amid the Rubble: The Purposes of God in Human History* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 77. See also Wainwright, *Lesslie Newbigin: A theological Life*, 232.

So then how are Christians to engage in dialogue? There are three important components which Newbigin implores the Christian to incorporate in the process dialogue. The first of these three involves the art of honestly *listening* to what the "other side" has to say: "The Christian partner in the dialogue of the religions will certainly put his or her 'Christianity' at risk."[7] Those who are genuinely participating in dialogue must be willing to reject their own belief system in response to the belief system with which they are engaging. A primary portion of listening entails a compliance to share in the culture and customs of the dialogue partner.

According to Newbigin, "The Christian must be ready to face the possibility of radical reconsideration of long-accepted formulations."[8] Thus the second variable is *(re)consideration* of faiths being exchanged. Putting one's own faith at risk may seem illogical or even dangerous; however, there is no other way to maintain integrity in dialogue if neither side is willing to accept what the other has to communicate. If the Christian's hope for the "other" dialogue partner is that they accept the message of the Cross, then the Christian too must be willing to accept as ultimate truth the differing beliefs and views received. One cannot expect someone to offer more than they are themselves willing to offer in return. There is a sense of vulnerability that requires faith that God will continue to sustain the faith that God has begun.

This leads to the third component in dialogue, namely *faith*. Newbigin writes: "he or she [listens and reconsiders] within the ultimate commitment to Jesus Christ as finally determinative of his or her way of understanding and responding to the experience."[9] There must be faith that God will enlighten the heart and mind toward ultimate truth. Whether that ultimate truth is found in the path of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and so on, faith is present in the hope that this ultimate truth will prevail.

One last facet in the processes of dialogue pertains to the caution of evangelizing before dialogue has taken place. As discussed previously, dialogue is the precursor of evangelism; dialogue is not evangelism itself. As I mentioned with regard to receptiveness on both sides, there is a risk of losing integrity in the dialogue when the premise solely becomes an

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[7] Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 186.
[8] Ibid., 186.
[9] Ibid., 186.

evangelistic endeavor. This type of evangelism that proselytizes entails a lack of reception toward the beliefs and truths brought forth by others.

Newbigin further justified the act of dialogue in Trinitarian terms.[10] In his book *Sin and Salvation*, Newbigin examines what is meant by "created in God's image". Newbigin's view is similar to Karl Barth's[11] in that the principal way in which humanity bears God's image is found in relationships and relational needs: "When God created man He did not create an individual: He created man-and-woman. For God is not an individual; God is personal, but He is not a person. He is Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God; one personal being in whom love is perfect and complete because love is both given and received."[12] Genesis 1:26a says: "Let *Us* create man in *Our* image, after *Our* likeness." This use of "us" and "our" is granted by biblical scholars as Trinitarian language[13]; perhaps therefore an aspect of *Imago Dei* means that humanity is "Trinitarian" pertaining to her image of God. As Newbigin writes: "God has placed in the very constitution of man the need for and possibility of love."[14]

There is consequently a common goal between people of differing faiths. The fact that humanity has instilled in her the capacity and desire for relationships, implores on those who have found Christianity to share and build relationships in order that this common need is met. Not only is this common need relational, it is also inclusive of the longing for purpose, which is "inescapable to human life."[15] Thus in offering relationship, purpose is defined to the extent that the relationship encompasses purpose within it.

Therefore, this need is first met in the act of relationships between people; sequentially and ultimately it is met through relationship with the

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[10] This mode of justification is adapted from Newbigin's *Trinitarian Faith and Today's Mission* in which he details a Trinitarian approach to missions. See also Wainwright's explanation, *Lesslie Newbigin*, 178–179.

[11] Though Newbigin did not develop his theology from Karl Barth or Emil Brunner (another theologian who shared this teaching based on Genesis 5:1–2), Newbigin was familiar with his contemporary Karl Barth and shared the unique notion of *Imago Dei* which was contrary to some of their contemporaries who believed that humanity's image of God is found in the ability to create (i.e., Paul Tillich amongst others).

[12] Lesslie Newbigin, *Sin and Salvation* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009), 17–18.

[13] This argument is expounded upon in greater detail by Miroslav Volf in *After Our Likeness: Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

[14] Newbigin, *Sin and Salvation*, 18.

[15] Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: the Gospel and Western Culture* (London: SPCK, 1990), 35.

triune God. Christians are to love; to love both neighbor and enemy. When the Church engages in Newbigin's form of dialogue, it is initiating the love and relationship that is commanded from the Father through the Son. From the initial relationship between individuals the subsequent process of meeting this need is catalyzed. Through relationships built by interfaith dialogue, Christians can bear witness to the relationship of Christ to the church, thus demonstrating to and then enabling the conversion of the dialogue partner.

The love of the Father is most visible in the act of and through the Son; the act of the death, burial, and resurrection. Here Newbigin adamantly emphasizes the historical event of the cross: "We are talking about a factual statement. Namely, that at a certain point in history, the history of this world, God is who is the author, the sustainer, the goal of all that exists, of all being and all meaning and all truth, has become present in our human history as the man Jesus, whom we can know and whom we can love and serve: and that by His incarnation, His ministry, His death and resurrection."[16] This event is the life force that moves the Church to act in the world. Since Christ has died for all, and salvation for all comes through His death, the good news of this cataclysmic event must be shared with all of the creation, a creation for whom the Son was atoned for.[17]

Newbigin writes: "Whatever else we do for people – to come to know Jesus, to love Him, to serve Him, to honor Him, to obey Him – *that* is the greatest thing that we can do for anyone and it is the specific thing entrusted to us. It must be the center of our missions"[18] and thus it is the center of our dialogue. Through the Son dialogue is not merely justified or warranted, but dialogue becomes a necessary means by which the Church can share and incorporate the enduring truth, the enduring story of Jesus the Son acting in and through history.

The third aspect of trinitarian dialogue, according to Newbigin, is the working of the Holy Spirit: "The Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment may use the non-Christian partner in dialogue to convict the church. Dialogue means exposure to the earth

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[16] Lesslie Newbigin, *Signs Amid the Rubble*, 113.

[17] Newbigin recognizes, in *Foolishness to the Greeks,* 127, the event of the resurrection as not being a "reversal of a defeat but the proclamation of a victory." This event of resurrection is greatly emphasized by Newbigin and his contemporary Karl Barth. Barth uses the same language of "event" and further states that it is what all other histories are measured against.

[18] Newbigin, *Signs Amid the Rubble*, 115.

shattering and upbuilding power of the God the Spirit."[19] For Newbigin it is the Spirit of God who converts the dialogue partner, not any persuasive arguments of the interlocutor. Newbigin states that an

> obedient witness to Christ means that whenever we come with another person (Christian or not) into the presence of the cross, we are prepared to receive judgment and correction, to find that our Christianity hides within its appearance of obedience the reality of disobedience. Each meeting with a non-Christian partner in dialogue therefore puts my own Christianity at risk.[20]

He uses the example of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10 to demonstrate the power and effectiveness of dialogue and how the Spirit uses interfaith conversation for the glory of God both in and out of the life of the Church. Conversion, as Newbigin articulates it, not only occurs with Cornelius, but conversion also occurs within Peter. Newbigin says that the "Holy Spirit shattered Peter's own deeply cherished image of himself as an obedient member of the household of God." Through this dialogue between Peter and Cornelius, the Holy Spirit converted Cornelius and also changed "Christianity".

The culmination of Trinitarian dialogue is that the real labor of mission is the work of Triune God. Newbigin writes:

> We are invited to participate in an activity of God which is the central meaning of creation itself. We are invited to become, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, participants in the Son's loving obedience to the Father. All things have been created that they may be summed up in Christ the Son. All history is directed towards that end. All creation has this as its goal. The Spirit of God, who is also the Spirit of the Son, is given as the foretaste of that consummation, as the witness to it, and as the guide of the Church on the road towards it. The Church is not promised success: it is promised the peace of Christ in the midst of tribulation, and the witness of the Spirit given out of the church's weakness and ignorance.[21]

[19] Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 186.

[20] Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 182.

[21] Lesslie Newbigin, *Trinitarian Faith and Todays Mission* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1963), 78.

The question of whether all shall be saved is a subject that could fill a book on its own (and has indeed done so),[22] but I think by briefly examining Newbigin's inclusivity of other religions, the context of interfaith dialogue can be appreciated on a new level and through it we are able to understand Newbigin's whole endeavor of interfaith dialogue.

In his book *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, Newbigin specifically addressed this issue with "other" faiths. He draws on themes of how one can reconcile Christ as the one true way while allowing for faithfulness in other (non-Christian) religions. One approach that Newbigin holds in tension is Karl Rahner's concept of Anonymous Christianity.[23] He deals with this concept along with other forms of inclusive pluralism in a formidable fashion. He again places great emphasis on the centrality of Christ: Christ as savior, Christ as creator, and Christ as the resurrected.[24]

Newbigin's answer to the tension held with other faiths comes in the form of "story telling".[25] He implores the reader to share the story of Jesus and subsequently the story of the Bible. He offers suggestions as how this might be done. When there is an opportunity for Christians and another non-Christian faith to cooperate, it must be done with the purpose of accomplishing biblical injunctions such as feeding the poor, helping the sick, and caring for the refugee, etc. When in cooperation with other faiths, Christians should be an example and witness through the ascertaining of this mutual goal. This notion of cooperation will present opportunities for the Christian to share the story of Christ and incorporate the dialogue partner into that very story.

Newbigin attempts to deconstruct the idea that there are only three options in relation to Christianity: inclusivism, pluralism, and exclusivism.[26] The foundation of his own claim is "exclusivist in the sense that it affirms the unique truth of the revelation in Jesus Christ, but not exclusivist in the sense of denying the possibility of salvation of the non-Christian."[27] Instead of trying to reveal the mysteries of God's saving

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[22] See for instance Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dare We Hope "That All Men Be Saved"?* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014).

[23] Karl Rahner, Paul Imhof, Hubert Biallowons, and Harvey D. Egan, *Karl Rahner in Dialogue: Conversations and Interviews, 1965–1982* (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 207.

[24] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 180–83.

[25] Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 182.

[26] Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 182–3.

[27] Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 182.

grace, Newbigin offers a refined assessment and allows for the Divine to complete its work.[28]

His Trinitarian justification for interfaith dialogue employs Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as catalysts for interacting with those of other faiths. His work as both an ecumenist and missionary helped to ushered in a new generation of Protestant theologians engaged in interfaith work. I wish to end with these final remarks from Lesslie Newbigin which summarize his understanding of the significance of interfaith dialogue for the Church: "The human story is one which we share with all other human beings – past, present, and to come. We cannot opt out of the story. We cannot take control of the story. It is under the control of the infinitely patient God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."[29] May we as the Church faithfully engage the religious other, confident in the patience of the Triune God.

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[28] Newbigin's idea closely resembles Michael Barnes's notion of Christological inclusivism seen in *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[29] Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 181.

Reforming Anti-Judaism in a Church Called to Communion

Mary Doak

Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda—the church reformed, always reforming: This phrase aptly expresses a task but also a hope, especially for those of us who have been nurtured and inspired, but also frustrated and even bitterly disappointed by our church. Much internal reform is obviously necessary if the church is to be the sign and instrument of unity-in-diversity that it is called to be. Ecclesial reform is urgently needed for the sake of a church that seems to have nothing to offer the disaffected younger generation but yet more of the same rancorous divisions so prevalent in society. Ecclesial reform is also crucial for the sake of the fragmented world to which the church is sent. We can only imagine what a healing force the church might be if it really lived the sacramental, loving, communion that embraces rather than rejects difference. Perhaps what Howard Thurman argued in the midst of the racial segregation of twentieth-century America remains true today: if the church truly

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exemplified a love in which everyone was accepted as a precious brother or sister, would not people flock to the church to learn its secret of how to live together in love and peace?[1]

Fearful of losing a distinct ecclesial identity, advocates of ecclesial neo-exclusivism seek a church that preserves its difference by criticizing rather than engaging with the world.[2] Apparently unaware of the irony of their approach, they would have the church emulate the tribal polarization of the world rather than the loving communion of the Holy Trinity that the church is called to embody in history.

This neo-exclusivism has fostered acrimonious divisions within churches battling over how to strengthen their distinct identity, while also impeding the ecumenism that seeks to heal divisions between Christian churches. An evident lack of Christian unity is such a serious obstacle to the church's mission to be a sign of unity-in-diversity that overcoming the divisiveness of neo-exclusivism must be a major focus of the church's reforming energy.[3] However, neo-exclusivism is also distracting the church from its responsibility to seek communion with non-Christians and, of particular concern here, from the project of overcoming the anti-Judaism deeply embedded in the Christian tradition. A church preoccupied with defending its own identity and traditions is not disposed to continue critiquing and revising those traditions, especially when that process requires dialogue with Jews or others outside the church. Yet communion with non-Christians is integral to the church's mission: if the church is to be a sign and instrument of unity-in-diversity, then the church must not only manifest unity within the church but also demonstrate a capacity for harmony with those outside of the church, and especially with the church's primary other—the Jews.

It is tempting to believe that the official church statements that have repudiated supersessionism and have revoked the deicide charge have brought an end to the long and tragic history of Christian contempt for

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[1] Howard Thurman, Walter Earl Fluker, and Catherine Tumbler, *A Strange Freedom: The Best of Howard Thurman on Religious Experience and Public Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), esp. 254–55.

[2] Gerard Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), esp. 43–74.

[3] I further explore this common view of the church's mission in my article, "The Unity and Disunity of Our Hope," in *Hope in the Ecumenical Future*, edited by Mark D. Chapman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 13–26.

Jews.[4] The claims that the Jews killed Jesus and now have no further divine covenant or role in salvation history are, of course, bad theology as well as the cause of much suffering and violence inflicted on Jews. Those of us whose ecclesial communities have officially rejected these anti-Jewish claims may conclude that we have adequately dealt with this painful aspect of Christian history. If Christian anti-Judaism is safely in the past, then surely the resurgence of violent antisemitism around the world and especially in the contemporary white supremacist movements in Europe and the United States is no fault of the church.

Unfortunately, as important as the official repudiation of Christianity's most lethal anti-Jewish claims is, it is not by itself enough to heal Christian anti-Judaism. After all, most Christians (including Catholics) do not regularly read and review the many official church documents. While such statements may get some brief attention in the press and perhaps in the pews, and they are significant resources for theologians debating the relevant issues, simply adding official statements to the archives does little in itself to transform Christian views.

Moreover, a distorted presentation of Jews as the enemies of Jesus and of the church remains explicit in Scriptures and implicit in the structures of Christian thought and practice.[5] *Nostra Aetate*'s rejection of the deicide charge may ensure that punitive supersessionism is not included in the current Catechism of the Catholic Church, for example, but it does not prevent the formation of negative views of Jews and of Judaism through the reading and proclamation of the gospels and other New Testament texts. To note just a few of the most problematic texts, the Gospel of Matthew describes a presumably Jewish crowd willingly accepting the guilt of Jesus' death for themselves and for their offspring; 1 Thessalonians declares that the Jews killed Jesus and the prophets and continue to oppose

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[4] See especially Vatican II, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*), 28 October 1965 at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html (accessed March 1, 2020). See also Franklin Sherman, ed., *Bridges:Documents of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue*, 2 vols. (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2011–2014).

[5] Among the numerous excellent studies on this topic, see especially Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury, 1974); William Nicholls, *Christian Antisemitism: A History of Hate* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1993); Edward Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013).

everyone, and the Gospel of John refers to Jews as sons of Satan and depicts them as conspiring to kill Jesus.[6]

Furthermore, reading gospel passages with little knowledge of the diversity of first-century Judaism, as most Christians do, contributes to a Jesus-against-Judaism construction in which Jesus' views are understood as repudiations of Jewish thought and practice rather than as the positions within intra-Jewish debates that they were. Judaism is frequently assumed to be a religion of harsh legalism, condemned by Jesus who (alone) recognized the need to temper law with mercy and love.[7]

Despite official ecclesial statements that Jews are not guilty of Jesus' death and their covenant is not superseded, the much more frequently read and revered New Testament thus continues to reinforce the five "Ds" of the teaching of contempt identified by Jules Isaac. Taken together, these texts lend considerable support to the view of Jews as *demonic* followers of a *degenerate* religion whose crime of *deicide* leads them to be *dismissed* from the covenant and (as early church leaders later concluded) to be *dispersed* from the land.[8] Is it any surprise that Jews continue to be obvious targets of those who seek to defend their western cultural identity against an "other" who is construed as an internal threat to western civilization?

Some of the anti-Jewish sentiments of the New Testament can be mitigated through better translations, such as replacing "the Jews" with "some Jewish leaders" in the Gospel of John. Education about Jesus' place within the diversity of first-century Judaism would also do much to interrupt naïve Christian assumptions about Jewish legalism. Nevertheless, many of these passages express an anti-Judaism that cannot be translated or explained away. If Christians are to preach or teach their faith responsibly, they must explicitly address the contempt for Judaism that is present in these New Testament texts as well as throughout the Christian tradition. This is an unending task: each generation must be taught anew to

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[6] Matt. 27:25; 1 Thes. 2:14–15; John 8:44 and especially John 18–19, along with the discussion in Kessler, *Introduction*, 25–44.

[7] See especially the discussion in John T. Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 76–107.

[8] Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism*, trans. Helen Weave (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964). See also the discussion of these "five Ds" as summarized in Elena Procario-Foley, "Liberating Jesus: Christian Feminism and Anti-Judaism" in *Frontiers in Catholic Feminist Theology: Shoulder to Shoulder*, edited by Susan Abraham and Elena Procario-Foley (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 97–118.

recognize and to reject the construction of Jews as Christians' abjected other, in contrast with whom the superior goodness of Christianity is defined. Especially with regard to Christian antisemitism, the church must indeed be a church reformed, always reforming.

Yet along with confronting this anti-Judaism, a further—and more difficult—theological challenge remains. It is not enough merely to refrain from negative depictions of Jews and of Judaism. Unless Christians are able to articulate a positive role for Judaism in the ongoing divine plan of salvation, Judaism remains implicitly superseded, regardless of ecclesial affirmations that God's covenant with the Jews is irrevocable. Given the Christian claim that Jesus is the definitive savior of the world, what, if any, purpose does Judaism (or any other religion) have after his coming?

This is not a question only for the theological elite. With Jewish Scriptures as part of the Christian Bible, Christians have no choice but to think about the Jews. As R. Kendall Soulen has rightly argued, Christians must develop some (at least implicit) overarching narrative that integrates the New Testament and the Hebrew Bible as the two parts of the Christian Bible.[9]

The common solution that proclaims Jesus to be the completion of the hopes of ancient Judaism is obviously supersessionist, leaving no further need for Judaism in the economy of salvation.[10] (The Jews are beloved, it would seem, for the sake of their ancestors, as stated in *Nostra Aetate*—but not for any ongoing role in the salvation of the world).[11] Moreover, declaring Jesus to be the fulfillment of the hopes of Israel is inadequate to the Hebrew Bible and distorts Christianity as well. As Soulen notes, when the revelation of God's history with the people of Israel is reduced to preparing for the coming of Jesus, Christians undermine their own hope for history along with theological concerns for the "middle values" of politics,

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[9] R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 114. See also the theological debates about the relation of the Jewish covenant to the Christian covenant in John T. Pawlikowski, *Jesus and the Theology of Israel* (Wilmington DE: Michael Glazier, 1989) and Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000).

[10] An unresolved tension between refusing explicit supersessionism and retaining implicit supersessionism is clearly evident in the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, "The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable," 10 December 2015 at: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20151210_ebraismo-nostra-aetate_en.html (accessed March 1, 2020).

[11] Vatican II, *Nostra Aetate* 4.

economics, and society that figure so prominently in the Hebrew Bible.[12] The result is an otherworldly and privatized faith, in which social ethics is, at best, of secondary importance to the Christian community.

The doctrine of the Second Coming should, of course, interrupt this claim that the hopes of Israel are fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. This doctrine stands as a reminder that Jesus has not in fact completely fulfilled biblical hopes, at least not yet. Christians share with Jews an outstanding hope for history, as such different thinkers as Rosemary Radford Ruether and, more recently, Joseph Ratzinger have both insisted.[13]

Perhaps the most promising suggestion for integrating the revelation of God's history with the Jews with the revelation in Jesus Christ is Soulen's view of the Bible as revealing God's plan for a diverse creation of mutual blessing. The universal covenant offered in Jesus of Nazareth is understood to be a new and (I would add) unforeseen divine act that adds to the opportunities for mutual blessing begun in the diversity of creation and furthered through the Abrahamic covenant intended as a blessing to the world.[14] Instead of the Christian covenant leading to the sin of seeking blessing apart from and at the expense of others, Soulen suggests that the distinctness of the Christian covenant ought to be an opportunity for greater mutual enrichment through sharing the diverse experiences and insights of the Christian and Jewish communities. In Jesus, gentiles are offered a covenant with God that is explicitly related to, but not a replacement of, God's covenant with Jews, which remains the "permanent and enduring medium of God's work as the Consummator of human creation, and therefore it is also the permanent and enduring context of the gospel about Jesus."[15]

Thus envisioning an ongoing and positive role for Jews and Judaism in the continuing history of salvation is necessary but not yet sufficient reform. As Mannion argued, true ecclesial reform requires an energizing vision, but it must be one that is not divorced from the "day-to-day reality of life in the church."[16] The goal here is not simply more adequate thought,

[12] Soulen, *God of Israel,* 50.
[13] See especially Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide* 248–250, and the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Bible* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2002), 21.
[14] Soulen, *God of Israel,* 114–140.
[15] Ibid. 110.
[16] Mannion, *Ecclesiology,* xii.

but rather a church that more fully embodies the communion with all that the church is called to witness and to work for in the world. True reform of Christian anti-Judaism requires that our churches not only imagine, but also live, a mutual blessing between Christians and Jews *at the congregational and parish level.*

A fairly easy first step toward the practice of mutual blessing is for Christian preachers and teachers regularly to consult and to include contemporary Jewish wisdom about the meaning of our common sacred texts in congregational worship and study. Seeking the insights of our elder brothers and sisters in faith could deeply enrich Christian understanding of the revelation received first through the Jews. Such consultation might also disrupt mistaken stereotypes of Judaism, while clearly witnessing to the belief that God continues to work in and through the people of the Abrahamic covenant for the good of the world.

Another and perhaps more far-reaching reform would be for congregations to work together with Jewish groups to bring the world closer to the just and peaceful harmony of our shared hopes. Given that Christians and Jews both await the harmonious consummation of history, this "dialogue of action" seems particularly appropriate as a common witness to the hopes of these two communities.[17] The pressing challenge of climate change, which threatens life as we know it and demands immediate and concerted action, is an important issue especially for those who believe in the divine blessing of creation. Working together, Christians and Jews might be more effective in their response to the climate crisis; they would also have opportunities to strengthen the bonds of friendship that are the basis for and best evidence of unity-in-diversity.

The church, called to embrace diversity in loving communion, has much to offer our deeply fractured world. But it must first learn to overcome the repudiation of the Jewish difference that has distorted Christianity from its beginning.

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[17] See especially the discussion of dialogue of action in Peter C. Phan, "Evangelization and Interreligious Dialogue: Compatible Parts of Christian Mission? – 2010" (2010). Santa Clara Lectures, 7 at: https://scholarcommons.scu.edu/sc_lectures/7 (accessed March 1, 2020).

Synodality and Participation

Overcoming "The Church as Counter-sign of the Kingdom"

Paul Avis

It is almost universally agreed by New Testament scholars that the coming of the kingdom or reign of God was the very core of Jesus' proclamation.[1] "After John [the Baptist] had been handed over, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and saying, 'The time has been fulfilled and the reign (*basileia*) of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mark. 1.14–15). The imminence of the kingdom was the "good news" ("gospel"). The theme of the nearness of the reign of God is pivotal for Jesus' destiny from beginning to end.

As early Christian theology evolved, Jesus came to be seen as the personal embodiment of the kingdom, the kingdom itself (*autobasileia*, as Origen put it). The one who proclaimed the kingdom was proclaimed by the church as the content of the kingdom. As Bultmann puts it, "*The*

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[1] "'The centrality of the kingdom of God (*basileiatoutheou*) in Jesus' preaching is one of the least disputable, or disputed, facts about Jesus": James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered, Christianity in the Making, Volume 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 383.

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proclaimer became the proclaimed."[2] From then onward the church could speak of the kingdom of Christ, as well as of God (1 Cor. 15. 24–25; 2 Peter 1.11; Rev. 20.6). The relationship or connection between the kingdom of God and the church has been argued about in the history of theology. Augustine of Hippo identified the two, while Protestant theology has tended to oppose them. In modern ecumenical theology the church is seen as the sign, instrument, and foretaste of the kingdom—serving the kingdom but staying in dialectical tension with it. The church spearheads the kingdom in the world, but is not identical with it. The church is judged against the kingdom. But what happens when the church obscures the kingdom of God and of Christ, the reign of love, justice and freedom, and becomes a *counter-sign of the kingdom*?

With regard to the failings of the church, we should distinguish between ordinary human moral frailty and intentional, premeditated human wickedness. To be a Christian is to know weakness as well as strength. The sign of a sanctified life is an overpowering sense of how far we still have to travel into the holiness of God. Perhaps the first sign of sainthood is self-abasement; the saints are moved by an overpowering sense of unworthiness. That is the condition for receiving grace. God's power is made perfect in human weakness (2 Cor. 12.9–10). Christian moral weakness, Christian sinfulness or "falling short", are unavoidable (Rom. 3.23; 7.14–25). We are steeped in sinfulness even as we are being transformed by the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3.18). However, the serious misdemeanours and crimes of the church corporately, such as those being uncovered in the current global sexual abuse scandal, are in another league altogether. Not only do they harm and ruin countless human lives, but they can also obliterate the kingdom of God and of Christ in the perception of many who are not directly affected. Where does that leave our doctrine of the church?

Because the church is identified with the body of Christ, crucified and risen, its weakness as well as its strength is apparent. Just as Christ's risen body bore the marks of crucifixion (John 20.20, etc.), so the church bears all the marks of human imperfection and fallibility, even of sin (which

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[2] Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, 2 vols (London, SCM Press, 1952), vol. 1, 33; italics original. Further on the theme of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom, the eschatological background and the implications for ecclesiology, see Paul Avis, *Jesus and the Church: The Foundation of the Church in the New Testament and Modern Theology* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2020).

cannot be predicated of Christ). As Martin Luther reminds us, Christ is veiled and hidden in the church. It is not easy to perceive him there. In the eyes of the world, Luther writes, "the church is like its bridegroom Christ: hacked to pieces, marked with scratches, despised, crucified, mocked", but in the eyes of God she is a holy, spotless dove.[3] Luther notoriously called the church 'the greatest sinner'. He said that, just as there is no-one who is a greater sinner than the Christian, so "there is no greater sinner than the Christian church", and that is why, he added, the church prays daily, "Forgive us our trespasses".[4] Unlike some modern theologians, including Pope John Paul II, Luther refuses to make a qualitative difference between the Christian and the church. For Luther, the church is at the same time sinful and justified, *ecclesia simul iusta et peccatrix*, just like the individual Christian.

But is it right to use that sort of language about the body of Christ? Some Christian traditions cannot accept it. The Orthodox would condemn it as blasphemous. Some Anglicans are certainly uncomfortable with it. Roman Catholics also struggle to admit that the church is sinful. But let Luther's statement stand alongside St Paul's confession (or one attributed to him) that he was 'the chief, or foremost of sinners' (1 Tim. 1.15). Paul is not being merely rhetorical. He is the number one sinner because he was 'formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence'(1 Tim. 1.13). He tried to strangle the infant church at birth (Acts 8.1–3; 26.10; Gal. 1.13). But is that the kind of language that should ever be used of an apostle of Jesus Christ and a saint of the church? I think it is basically the same issue in both cases: holy church and holy apostle; sinful apostle, sinful church.

There is an unavoidable ambiguity about the church. It is at once sign and countersign of Christ and of the kingdom of God. Like John the Baptist in Grünewald's Eisenheim altarpiece, the church points people to Christ crucified and that is a vivid depiction of its true role. But the church often seems to point people away from Christ and in the opposite direction. It deters people from coming to him in faith and gives them an aversion to Christianity. Today many people of integrity and goodwill experience a sense of revulsion at the church and are deeply suspicious of

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[3] *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 54, *Table Talk*, trans. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1967), 262.

[4] *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar 1883–), vol. 34/1, 276: *Non est tam magna peccatrix ut Christiana ecclesia*.

the clergy. How many people are today outside the church because of the church? How many who once were regular worshippers and communicants are now alienated? In our own small worlds, we are all aware of numerous friends who once went to church and no longer do so.

Paul's expression "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. 2.7, KJB) can stand for the fact that the church, the vehicle of Christ's mission in the world and the privileged instrument of his kingdom, can be the means of turning people away from him. We struggle to understand how God could permit that reality to stand within God's good purposes for the world and the church. It is part of the great unanswerable question of theodicy. Sin in the church is the question of *ecclesial theodicy*. We do not know why God allows such depths of depravity in God's church, any more than we understand why God allows such depths of depravity in the world at large.

The church and its ministers sometimes obscure Christ's presence in the world. The public face of the church can become a counter-sign of Christ, averting people from him. In our own time, because of serious abuses committed by clergy and culpable acts of cover-up by the episcopal hierarchy, the church itself has become—and here is the tragic irony—a major instrument of the *de-christianization of Christendom*. It is as though the church has been digging its own grave. The church as a human institution is capable of great evil and can perpetrate enormous wrong. As Paul says, 'Antichrist makes his throne in the temple of God' (2 Thess. 2.4). How difficult it is at such times to say with the Ceylonese Methodist bishop and evangelist D. T. Niles: "The answer to the problems of the world is the answer that Jesus Christ provided, which is the church."[5] It carries so little credibility that today even many Christians would hesitate to affirm this without qualification.

The church is, by definition, a community of sinners and no others, though sinners who are being sanctified through word and sacrament. When their sins get the upper hand and lead the church as an institution to commit great wrong, we have no alternative but to say that the church itself is sinful. Karl Rahner, S.J., who calls the question of the sinfulness of the church "one of the most agonising questions of ecclesiology", is prepared to assert without equivocation that "the church is sinful". For Rahner, it is dissembling and self-deceiving to say that flagrant sinners and wrong-doers are "in" the church but not "of" it, that their actions do not

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[5] D. T. Niles [1908–1970], *The Message and Its Messengers* (Nashville, TS: Abingdon, 1966), 50.

touch the character of the church, that the church remains spotless while its representatives commit appalling crimes. As Rahner puts it, "The church is a sinful church: this is a truth of faith […] and it is a shattering truth."[6] Vatican II acknowledged that the church is always in need of penitence, purification and renewal, even of reformation.[7]

When the glory of God is eclipsed in the church by its sins, we have to say with Luther, "The face of the church is the face of one who is a sinner, troubled, forsaken, dying and full of distress."[8] Henri de Lubac puts it similarly: "On the one hand we see an assembly of sinners, a mixed herd, wheat gathered with the straw, a field with tares growing in it: *Corpus Christi mixtum*, the ark which shelters clean and unclean animals; on the other [hand] we have an unspotted virgin, mother of saints, born on Calvary from the pierced side of Jesus […] the very assembly she has made holy […] known only to God."[9]

Having touched on some Roman Catholic voices, I now want to mention a powerful Anglican contribution. Ephraim Radner's *A Brutal Unity: The Spiritual Politics of the Christian Church*[10] is a plea for rethinking ecclesiology in a way that takes the history of division in the church—and the tragic and sometimes criminal consequences of division—with greater seriousness. Radner argues for a "realistic" ecclesiology, rather than an idealistic one that does not reflect the state of the church as it is. Radner's realism means looking at the church without our customary rose-tinted spectacles. The church that goes wrong, commits sins and crimes, is not other than Christ's church. It is not merely the earthly shadow of the real heavenly church, nor is it simply the visible tip of an invisible iceberg. Neither is it the ecclesial mirror-image of the social Trinity, as in some

[6] Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6 (Baltimore, ML: Helicon Press; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969), 253, 256–260 ('The church of Sinners'). See now also Brian P. Flanagan, *Stumbling in Holiness: Sin and Sanctity in the Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2018).

[7] *Lumen Gentium* 8; *Unitatis Redintegratio* 6. See also Karl Rahner, 'The Sinful church in the Decrees of Vatican II', *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6, chapter 18; Paul Avis, *Beyond the Reformation? Authority, Primacy and Unity in the Conciliar Tradition* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 200–203.

[8] Cited Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* (St Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 262.

[9] Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind*, trans. L. C. Sheppard (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1950), 26.

[10] Ephraim Radner, *A Brutal Unity: The Spiritual Politics of the Christian Church* (Waco: TX: Baylor University Press, 2012).

communio ecclesiology. The church is not a politically uncontaminated mystical body, but is political through and through, inescapably involved with issues of power and justice or injustice. The sinful church that we see is the church. The only church that there is, is a sinful church. In Radner's view, such ecclesiological realism does not eradicate the church's potential to be an instrument of the mission of God. The two aspects exist in tension. As Radner puts it, the fact that "disordered failure and redemptive capacity" coincide in the church's life is "one of the most anguished centers" of Christian experience.

Christian disunity and division is not only an appalling evil in itself but it gives birth to even worse evils. Through an analysis of the late medieval and post-Reformation religious wars in Europe, the church in Hitler's Germany, massacres in Burundi and genocide in Rwanda, Radner shows that the failure of the churches to stand together, to speak and act as one against a common foe, proved to be their undoing and led in some cases to direct involvement in killing, or at least complicity in it. He rejects the recent Roman Catholic apologetic which protests that, while individual members have sinned grievously, "the church as such" or "the church in itself" (John Paul II) remains immaculate. Radner's approach is not anti-institutional; no body of humans can suppose that it lacks form. He disputes what he takes to be William Cavanaugh's thesis that religion is usually employed as a pretext for violent action by other powers.[11] No, it is religion itself that is sometimes lethal. The unpalatable fact is that "religious violence has a horrendous character peculiar to itself". It finds opportunity when a distorted version of religious identity "empowers evil". The religious wars in Europe have been characterized as "killing people for God's sake".[12] Even in modern times, Christians have prepared themselves by prayer or even by receiving Holy Communion to slaughter the innocent. Radner draws on the Rwanda genocide to argue that there is a kind of Christianity, one that is not at all uncommon, that lends itself to this kind of perversion. It stresses obedience to religious authority;

[11] William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). See also now Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014); Richard A. Burridge and Jonathan Sacks, eds., *Confronting Religious Violence: A Counternarrative* (London: SCM Press; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018).

[12] Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400–1536* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

plays up religious differences, stereotyping and ultimately demonizing the other; revels in power play and political jockeying; and manipulates powerful indigenous sacral forces for its own purposes. That toxic cocktail makes forgiveness, reconciliation and sacrifice between separated Christians impossible. Certain recognizable types of Christian mindset are congenitally receptive to being taken over for evil purposes.[13] Religious division and violence are not so much cause and effect as "consanguineous". The church as a "killer" is an almost unbearable thought, a prime cause of theological vertigo, but a wholesale catalogue of horrors would probably make the third article of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in … the holy catholic church", stick in the throat.

So we have an institution fraught with ambiguity and our response to that ambiguity is one of acute ambivalence. We are in two minds about the church. We know that if we love Christ, we should love his church. If we love his church we should spend ourselves for its unity and devote ourselves to its mission. But we also sense that Christ grieves over the church. Pascal says, "Christ will be in agony until the end of the world."[14] We would defend her to the death; but we are heartbroken with grief at her failings. Only God is perfect; only God never fails. Nevertheless, there is much that we can and should do. First, for corporate sin there should be corporate penitence and it should be expressed liturgically at every level of the church, led by the episcopate. Second, there should be structural and practical reform, setting right what has gone wrong and extirpating abuses. Like love in 1 Corinthians 13, reform "never ends", hence the watchword *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*. Third, there should be development, adapting doctrine and practice to meet fresh challenges. Development is a proper function of the church; it is part of its business and not something to be defensive about. Chastened by penitence and checked by reform, development is the way out of the present quagmire.

[13] Radner draws on Timothy Paul Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[14] Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 313.

To Live According to the Form of the Holy Gospel: Francis of Assisi's Embodied Challenge to the Institutional Church

Craig A. Phillips

It is common in contemporary North American society to hear explicit rejection of the "institutional church," or "organized religion." Sexual misconduct scandals involving clergy and lay staff, accompanied in some places by the continuing shelter and protection of known sexual abusers across denominations, along with occasional financial fraud and misuse of church funds, have led many to conclude that the institutional church cannot be trusted to govern itself in a manner that fosters public trust, and in a manner consistent with the Gospel message the church seeks to proclaim.

In addition, the organized juridical structure of the church is often seen to be at odds with the personal needs of people formed by the values of a highly individualistic culture. As a result, the church often does not offer sufficient resources to help individuals find coherence between their daily life and their religious practices. This essay will explore what the contemporary church can learn from Francis of Assisi and the ancient

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monastic traditions of the church so that by focusing less on itself as an institution, it might offer concrete resources to help contemporary Christians find continuity between who they are and what they do.

The first part of the essay examines how Francis of Assisi (1181/1182–1226) challenged the juridical structures of the institutional church of his day in two ways: by his decision "to live according to the form of the Holy Gospel," thus deferring the establishment of a monastic rule to govern his life, and by his decision to live without property. In his political theory, Giorgio Agamben sheds light on these two decisions of Francis. Agamben's unique interpretation of Francis allows for the identification of resources to change the church that might otherwise remain hidden were we to focus solely on a critique of the juridical structures of monastic communities or of the larger church itself.

The concluding section of the essay examines what the Most Rev. Michael Curry, the Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church, is doing to re-brand the church as the "Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement" and how the "Way of Love, Rule of Life" that he and other leaders of the church have developed and propagated, resonates with Francis's way of changing the church through the example of Francis' life lived according to the pattern of Jesus Christ.

In 1206, as Francis of Assisi was praying before the Byzantine crucifix that hung in the dilapidated church of St. Damiano, he heard the divine voice say to him, "Francis, rebuild my church, which as you can see is going to ruins." At first, Francis took this call literally, focusing on gathering stones and mortar to repair the physical church. As time went on, he realized that the reform of the church involved more than material repairs. Hearing a reading from the Gospel of Matthew in which Jesus tells his followers to "take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff [….]" (Mt 10:9), Francis, a layperson, resolved to live henceforth without property, as a beggar, wearing a simple cloak and cord.

In his study of Christian monastic traditions, Giorgio Agamben identifies two distinct ways that Francis sought to live outside the juridical structures of the church: the first was his attempt to pattern his life in accordance with the example of Jesus without formalized monastic rules and the second was his explicit refusal to own property. Agamben turns to Christian monasticism for his contemporary political philosophy so that he begins to "construct a form-of-life" […] that is, a life, "linked so closely to its form

that it proves to be inseparable from it."[1] In monasticism, Agamben sees an attempt, even if not fully realized, to bridge the gap between life (being) and form of life (practice), that is, between being and doing.

The uniqueness of Francis' challenge to the institutional church of his day is that it did not begin as an intentional social or political movement of reform but rather was found in the inward and outward form of his own personal life.[2] "Unlike earlier founders — Benedict, Augustine, Bernard — Francis presented his followers not with a coherent rule, but with himself."[3]

As more and more people joined Francis in his movement, which at first was solely an individual endeavor on Francis's part, authorities of the established church felt it necessary to establish juridical principles to rein in the threat that Francis' radical form of life posed to the church. In the midst of a church deeply suspicious of wandering mendicants (and with a history of suppressing such movements), these authorities sought to put the monastic community that grew up organically around Francis under some sort of juridical structure.

The earliest rule of Francis from 1209 to 1210 has not survived. It was most likely composed of the two formulas, *vivere secundum formam sancti Evangelii* (to live according to the form of the Holy Gospel) and *vivere sine proprio* (to live without property), along with some supporting citations from Holy Scripture. Elements of the earliest rule, no doubt, survive in "The Rule without the Papal Seal" (*Regula non bullata*) of 1221. This document affirmed that the form of Francis's life, the outward manifestation of his unique vocation inseparably entwined with that of Jesus, itself comprises Francis' rule of life: "This is the life of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that Brother Francis petitioned the Lord Pope to grant and confirm for him […] and his brothers present and to come."[4] In his *Testament* written

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[1] Giorgio Agamben, *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Forms-of-Life*, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2013), xi. See also Giorgio Agamben, "The Inappropriable," in *Creation and Anarchy: The Word of Art and the Religion of Capitalism*, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2019), 29–50. See 29–31.

[2] Gert Melville, *The World of Medieval Monasticism: Its History and Forms of Life*, trans. James D. Mixson, Cistercian Studies Series, Number 263. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2016), 211.

[3] Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: The Life* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013), 40.

[4] Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellman, and William J. Short, eds, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1, *The Saint*.(New York: New City Press, 1999), 63.

near the end of his life, Francis described his simple vocation in the following way:

> And after the Lord gave me some brothers, no one showed me what I had to do (*quid deberemfacere*), but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live (*quod deberem vivere*) according to the pattern of the Holy Gospel (*vivere secundum formam sancti Evangelii*). And I had this written down simply and in a few words and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me.[5]

Giorgio Agamben argues that the distinction between the *quid* and the *quod* demonstrates that Francis' rule cannot be understood in anyway as a normative (legal) code:

> The technical opposition between the substantial and content-oriented *quid* (what I must do) and the existential and factual *quod* (that I must live) shows that Francis cannot be concerned with a rule in the proper sense, which establishes precepts and duties (*quid deberem facere*). And the opposition is not only between "what" and "that," but also between "doing" and "living," the observation of precepts and norms and the simple fact of living according to a form […]. As opponents and followers immediately understood, the "form of the holy Gospel" is not in any way reducible to a normative code.[6]

The Rule of 1221 states that "The rule and life (*regula vel vita*) of these brothers is this: namely: to live in obedience, in chastity, and without anything of their own, and to follow the teachings and footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ."[7] The fact the "rule" and "life" are separated by the Latin word *vel,* and not *aut*, shows that the terms are used interchangeably and not in opposition to each other. Here rule and life coincide, each enriching the other.[8]

The basis of Agamben's analysis of Francis can be found in his investigations into the origins of the structure and function of political

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[5] Armstrong, Hellman, and Short, *Francis*, vol. 1, 125.

[6] Agamben, *The Highest Poverty*, 97**.**

[7] Armstrong, Hellman, and Short, *Francis*, vol. 1, 63–64.

[8] In the *Testament*, Francis makes a distinction between "priests who live according to the form of the holy Roman Church" (*qui vivunt secundum formam sanctae Ecclesiae Romanae*) and his own call "to live according to the pattern (*formam*) of the Holy Gospel." Agamben notes that "the syntagma *form of life* … does not appear as such in the writings attributed to Francis.". See Agamben, *The Highest Poverty*, 96.

sovereignty in Western societies. Because the will of the sovereign is indistinguishable from the law, in the sovereign, law and life coincide. In the figure of the monastic, however, the form of life (shaped by monastic rule (*regula*) as opposed to law (*lex*)), and life itself coincide, in an "inverse parallel" to the sovereign. Thus, the figure of the monastic offers Agamben resources for thinking a life lived outside of law.[9]

By insisting that his life was at the same time the example of the rule and the rule itself, Francis resisted the need for a separate legal framework to bind the monastic community together. As a result, his form of life "rendered juridical authority inoperative."[10]

The Franciscan abdication of every right (*abdicatio omnis juris*) to own property, similarly, was a rejection not only of the ownership of material things but also of what might otherwise have been invoked to protect or stabilize the Franciscan form of life by means of external juridical structures. Agamben argues that the meaning of Francis's formula *vivere sine proprio* is not to be found merely in the "the act of renouncing juridical ownership" alone but rather is found in constituting a "form of life" that is "always already constitutively outside the law" and therefore "can never appropriate anything to itself."[11]

Francis' desire to bring together life and form of life into a coherent whole, without reliance on juridical structures to bind them together, offers the church a new way to embody what it means to be a disciple of Jesus today.

In 2018, The Most Rev. Michael Curry called the Episcopal Church to adopt a rule of life centered around Jesus:

> I believe our vocation is to live as the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. But how can we together grow more deeply with Jesus Christ at the center of our lives, so we can bear witness to his way of love in and for the world? The deep roots of our Christian tradition may offer … a path.

[9] DeCarli, "What is a Form-of-Life?: Giorgio Agamben and the Practice of Poverty," in Daniel McLoughlin, ed., *Agamben and Radical Politics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 207–233. See 213.

[10] DeCarli, "What is a Form-of-Life?" 214.

[11] Agamben, Creation and Anarchy, 37. For a discussion of Agamben's critique of the juridical structures of the contemporary church, see Craig A. Phillips, "The Reign of God and the Church: Giorgio Agamben's Messianic Critique of the Church," in Mark Chapman, ed., Hope in the Ecumenical Future. Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 63–81.

For centuries, monastic communities have shaped their lives around rhythms and disciplines for following Jesus together. Such a pattern is known as a "Rule of Life." [… T]he Way of Love: Practices for Jesus-Centered Life – outlines a Rule for the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement.[12]

"The Way of Love," is a "way of life." It is "an intentional commitment to a set of practices. It's a commitment to follow Jesus" centered on the following practices: "Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, Rest."[13] The accompanying text provides a brief explanation of each of the practices:

TURN: Pause, listen, and choose to follow Jesus.
LEARN: Reflect on Scripture each day, especially on Jesus' life and teachings.
PRAY: Dwell intentionally with God each day.
WORSHIP: Gather in community weekly to thank, praise, and dwell with God.
BLESS: Share faith and unselfishly give and serve.
GO: Cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus.
REST: Receive the gift of God's grace, peace, and restoration.

Rather than calling the Episcopal Church to a particular social or political program, Curry calls the church simply to follow the example of Jesus and to live that out in the world in which the church now finds itself. While the organizational structure of the church remains unchanged, attention is drawn away from it so that renewed attention can be focused on a set of embodied practices directly connected to the person and example of Jesus, practices that can change the church and the world. This deemphasizes the institutional church as it focuses instead on concrete practices that relate directly to Christian discipleship.

While Agamben is looking for philosophical and not theological solutions to the separation of doing and being and form of life from life itself, he employs theological texts and resources to carry out this task. In Francis, Agamben finds resources to address these philosophical issues.[14]

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[12] "The Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life", at: https://episcopalchurch. org/way-of-love/invitation (accessed February 17, 2020). Bishop Curry first announced "The Way of Love" at the opening Eucharist of the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church on July 5, 2018.

[13] "The Way of Love".

[14] Agamben writes, "[…T]he most precious legacy of Franciscanism, to which the West must return ever anew to contend with it as its undeferrable task: how to think a form-of-life,

The life of Francis of Assisi and the "Way of Love," each provide rich resources to change the church today. Each reminds the church of the centrality of Jesus Christ, who is revealed in the witness of Holy Gospels and encountered through the worship in the sacraments of the church.

Agamben's philosophical interpretation of Francis highlights not only how Francis changed the church by the example of a life directly modeled on that of Jesus, but how, by refusing to develop, at least at the beginning, a monastic rule in line with the established juridical structures of the day, he changed the church of his day by reconnecting it to the life and ministry of Jesus. Francis was firmly rooted in Holy Scripture as he desired solely to live "according to the form of the Holy Gospel" and "in the footprints of Jesus Christ whom we must follow."[15] Bishop Curry, similarly, is implementing change within the Episcopal Church by drawing on rich monastic traditions, of which Francis of Assisi is an integral part, by calling the people in the church to adopt a rule of life integrally connected to Jesus and the Scriptures that bear witness to him. May we in the church once again learn from the example of blessed Francis and commit ourselves to walk in the footprints of Jesus Christ, who is "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2). This practice will change the church.

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a human life entirely removed from the grasp of the law and a use of bodies and of the world that would never be substantiated into an appropriation. That is to say again: to think life as that which is never given as property but only as a common use." See Agamben, *The Highest Poverty*, xiii.

[15] *Regula non bullata*, Chapter 22:2. See Armstrong, Hellman, and Short, *Francis*, vol. 1, 79.

Authority and Change: The Role of Authority in the Anglican Communion and the Lutheran World Federation

Miriam Haar

This article explores the relationship between change and authority and discusses the role of authority when churches and global ecclesial communions experience change. Recent developments regarding human sexuality in two Christian World Communions, the Anglican Communion (AC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), serve as case studies. Although similar challenges have occurred in other global ecclesial communions such as the World Methodist Council, the AC and the LWF have been selected because in both communions these challenges have stirred debates about the understanding and practice of authority when trying to hold together the global communion. In both communions, the member churches are autonomous and there is no "magisterium". Both communions have member churches that have implemented decisions and introduced legislation that have brought about change: change regarding same-sex partnerships and regarding the ordination of homosexual pastors

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and priests and the consecration of bishops.[1] Thus, both have member churches which ordain homosexual people and conduct blessings or marriages for people living in same-sex unions and, at the same time, both communions have member churches opposed to this.

When churches and global ecclesial communions are faced with changes including over complex and divisive issues, questions related to authority arise: Who has the authority to allow change or to hinder these developments? How do churches which are members of *one* global communion react when change happens in churches which are members of the same communion?

Recent Developments in the Anglican Communion

The AC is a global communion with about 85 million members in 46 different churches in more than 165 countries. All are in communion, or in a reciprocal relationship, with the See of Canterbury and recognize the Archbishop of Canterbury as the Communion's spiritual head. There is no central authority in the AC. All the provinces are autonomous and free to make their own decisions in their own ways guided by recommendations from the four "Instruments of Communion" which are the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference, the Primates' Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC).

In the wake of the 13th Lambeth Conference in 1998, there was heated disagreement between churches of the AC over the issue of biblical warrant for ordaining homosexual clergy and blessing same-sex unions. In its resolution on "Human Sexuality",[2] the Lambeth Conference states that "in view of the teaching of Scripture, [it] upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage".[3] Although the bishops at Lambeth recognize that there are members of the Church who "experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation"[4] and "assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptized, believing and

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[1] I have chosen to speak of "homosexuality", and not to use the more inclusive "LGBTQ+" terminology, because the two world communions still use the former terminology and very few member churches use the LGBTQ+ terminology.

[2] Resolution I.10 "Human Sexuality" at: https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/76650/1998.pdf (accessed January 8, 2020).

[3] Ibid., I.10 b.

[4] Ibid., I.10 c.

faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ",[5] they reject "homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture",[6] and "call […] on all […] [their] people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation".[7] Therefore, the Conference "cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions".[8] The Conference passed this resolution with overwhelming majority (526 to 70).

Despite this resolution, both practices were subsequently promoted by some congregations of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Episcopal Church in the United States (ECUSA, now TEC) which consecrated the AC's first openly gay bishop Gene Robinson in 2003. More recently also the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) implemented similar decisions regarding the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ Anglicans. This drew strenuous objections from other parts of the AC. In protest, some American congregations withdrew from the TEC in 2007 and affiliated with the Church of Nigeria, whose primate appointed an American bishop without the consent of the See of Canterbury.

In June 2008 more than 300 bishops from North America and the United Kingdom joined Anglican leaders from the "Global South" (mainly Africa but also Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America), where the majority of contemporary Anglicans live, to attend the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem.[9] About 230 of these bishops boycotted the following month's 2008 Lambeth Conference.

The then Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams had ruled out reopening resolution 1.10 from Lambeth 1998 at the 14th Lambeth Conference in 2008 which was attended by about 650 Anglican bishops. He emphasized the "listening process" in which diverse views and experiences of human sexuality were collected and collated in accordance with that resolution. The bishops did not vote on any resolutions, but instead held a series of small group discussions about the many issues that divide them. Rowan Williams suggested a "covenant" regarding core Anglican identity to help overcome differences between liberals and traditionalists.

[5] Ibid., I.10 c.
[6] Ibid., I.10 d.
[7] Ibid., I.10 d.
[8] Ibid., I.10 e.
[9] Cf. https://www.gafcon.org/ (accessed January 8, 2020).

The ten-year cycle followed since 1948 set a precedent which suggested that a Lambeth Conference would be held in 2018, but the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby wanted to visit all primates in their own countries before calling the next Conference. At their meeting in Canterbury in October 2017, the primates decided that the same terms which the TEC accepted in 2016 for its decision to adopt inclusive marriage policies without AC consultation should be applied to the SEC as a result of its own support for same-sex marriage. The result was that until 2020 the SEC agreed that it would "no longer represent the Communion on ecumenical and interfaith bodies; should not be appointed or elected to internal standing committees and that, while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, […] would not take part in decision making on any issues of doctrine or polity".[10]

In the months leading to the 2020 Lambeth Conference under the theme "God's Church for God's world: walking, listening and witnessing together",[11] there have already been fierce debates about the Archbishop of Canterbury's decision not to invite same-sex spouses.[12] This affects four bishops from the USA and Canada.[13] Several bishops, including Bishop Michael Curry, the Presiding Bishop of TEC, have already expressed their concern over this decision.

GAFCON demands that the Anglican Church in North America is recognized as new province in the AC and that this province shall be invited to Lambeth 2020. Yet, it is the Archbishop of Canterbury's authority to grant this status, and there is currently no sign that he would take this juridical step. These different developments illustrate that differences in the understanding of human sexuality challenge the exercise of authority in the AC.

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[10] Cf. Communiqué from the Primates' Meeting, Canterbury Cathedral, England, October 2017 at: https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/311326/communiqu%C3%A9-primates-meeting-2017.pdf (accessed January 8, 2020).

[11] Cf. https://www.lambethconference.org/ (accessed January 9, 2020).

[12] Cf. https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2019/22-february/news/uk/same-sex-spouses-not-invited-to-lambeth-2020 (accessed October 24, 2019).

[13] Cf. https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2019/09/17/house-of-bishop-opens-fall-meeting-with-discussions-of-same-sex-spouse-exclusion-from-lambeth-2020/ (accessed October 24, 2019).

Recent Developments in the Lutheran World Federation

Controversies over human sexuality have also arisen within the worldwide Lutheran Communion, yet the picture looks very different. Founded in 1947, the LWF today is a global communion of 77 million Lutheran Christians in 148 member churches in 99 countries. The LWF member churches have diverse forms of worship, structures, ministry, and socio-ethical approaches. Doctrinally speaking, their unity is based on what is expressed in *Confessio Augustana* VII.[14]

Since 2007 the Church of Sweden (CoS) has offered a religious blessing for same-sex unions. Based on a proposal from the CoS's governing board, the synod of the CoS, its highest decision-making authority, voted to conduct wedding ceremonies for both heterosexual and homosexual couples in 2009. This was approved by 176 of 249 voting members. In 2009, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) held a national church-wide assembly in Minneapolis which passed "Human Sexuality, Gift and Trust",[15] and voted to allow congregations to ordain homosexuals in monogamous relationships as clergy to the church. A separate motion recommended that a rite of blessing for same-sex unions be provided.

In response to these decisions, the Evangelical-Lutheran Mekane Yesus Church in Ethiopia announced that it would sever its ties with ELCA and CoS. This decision was originally introduced in a July 2012 initiative implemented by the Mekane Yesus Church Council and was ratified after a general convocation meeting in Addis Ababa in early 2013. The Mekane Yesus Church declared that it would not be affiliated with any churches "who have openly accepted same-sex marriage", and from this point onward may not accept Holy Communion from their pastors, nor are they allowed to distribute Holy Communion to their members.[16] The question emerged how the LWF as a communion could deal with this wound in the body of Christ.

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[14] "The Augsburg Confession [1530]," in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (eds.), *The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 43.

[15] https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/SexualitySS.pdf (accessed January 10, 2020).

[16] https://www.christianpost.com/news/ethiopian-church-severs-ties-with-lutherans-over-homosexuality-89745/ (accessed January 10, 2020).

As the issues of family, marriage, and sexuality had been a matter of debate between LWF member churches before, the Council decided in 1995 to start a consultation process on human sexuality. At its meeting at Lund in 2007, the Council adopted guidelines for respectful dialogue over five years as recommended by the task force report.[17] At the same Council meeting the issue of blessings for people living in same-sex relationships triggered heated debates, as shortly beforehand, the CoS had announced that it would give blessings to same-sex couples in committed, faithful relationships. No action was taken by the Council and the LWF did not take a position on these issues. A shortage of time meant that proposed guidelines for discussing human sexuality did not succeed in gaining full acceptance. The then LWF General Secretary Ishmael Noko stressed at the next Council meeting in Arusha (2008) that: "This is a pastoral issue that each church individually must deal with".

Following the message of the General Assembly in Winnipeg (2003) to re-affirm dialogue processes and to advocate for the dignity of all people, at the next Assembly in Stuttgart (2010) tensions simmered regarding the issue, despite pleas for patience and unity from Noko and the out-going president Bishop Mark S. Hansen.

As the five-year period of consultation on human sexuality between member churches came to completion in 2012, the Council in Bogotá (2012) reconnected the conversation at the global level.[18] The Council decided that the issue would not divide the communion and that the communion as a whole should not take action on issues of family, marriage, and sexuality.[19] The "Emmaus Conversation" as the Council decided to call this dialogue process continued after the meeting. Looking to the biblical account of the encounter between Jesus and the disciples on the road to Emmaus, LWF member churches embraced mutual accompaniment as the model for communion relationships. When reflecting on the relationship of "Autonomy and Accountability" at the Council meeting in Geneva in 2013, General Secretary Martin Junge pointed out that

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[17] Cf. https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/Exhibit%2010%20Report%20 Task%20Force%20English.pdf (accessed January 10, 2020).

[18] Cf. *A Chronological Compilation of Key Official LWF Discussions and Decisions on Family, Marriage and Sexuality 1995–2013* at: https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/ LWF-Emmaus_chronological_compilation1995-2013.pdf (accessed January 10, 2020).

[19] Cf. https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/120620Joint%20PRes-GS%20 letter_ENG.pdf (accessed January 8, 2020).

[a]s a Communion we have not been able to dig deeper into the interrelationship between the constitutional reference to the autonomy of each of the LWF's member churches to take its own decisions, on the one side, and their mutual accountability as these same autonomous member churches respond together to the call to live and work together in communion, on the other side.[20]

This illustrates that ecclesiologically, the LWF understands itself as a *communio sanctorum*, not a communion of the likeminded.

As these disagreements on human sexuality are not just ethical issues or issues of justice, but related to underlying differences in biblical hermeneutics and to the self-understanding of the Lutheran Communion, two study processes were started, one on biblical hermeneutics and one on the self-understanding of the Lutheran Communion. Because of the realization that "there are tensions on how … [the Holy Scriptures] should be read and their meaning appropriated in different contexts",[21] the study process on biblical hermeneutics "sought to revisit [the Lutheran Communion's] … own theological roots and identity".[22] As for Lutherans the Scripture, as *norma normans*, has the highest authority, Lutheran and ecumenical theologians came together to read selected biblical texts in light of the interpretive traditions of the Reformation and in response to local and global issues. The lessons gleaned from this process are synthesized in *The Bible in the Life of the Lutheran Communion. A Study Document on Lutheran Hermeneutics* (2016). Although such a document cannot solve the disagreements, it stresses shared Lutheran convictions and recommends "ongoing dialogue about points of biblical interpretation on which members of the LWF disagree".[23]

As the recent controversies regarding the understanding of human sexuality also relate to the self-understanding of the Lutheran Communion and the underlying questions of authority, a working group dealt with these issues and developed the study document *The Self-Understanding of*

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[20] Cf. "Claiming the Gift of Communion in a Fragmented World" at: https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/EXHIBIT%209.0.1%20Claiming%20the%20gift%20of%20communion%20in%20a%20fragmented%20world.pdf (accessed January 10, 2020).

[21] *The Bible in the Life of the Lutheran Communion. A Study Document on Lutheran Hermeneutics* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2016), 5.

[22] Ibid., 5.

[23] Ibid., 29.

the Lutheran Communion (2015).[24] When describing the relationships of member churches within the communion, this document introduces the notion of "accountability" and stresses that "[a]s a communion of churches, we are called to mutual accountability".[25] From these elucidations, one could develop what I propose to call "communion accountability". This term captures LWF's task of balancing autonomy, authority, and mutual accountability that comes with the gift of global unity. "Communion accountability" points to the recent emphasis on LWF's ecclesiology as a global *and* local communion of churches. This reality is a huge challenge regarding the reception of decisions of LWF governing bodies and the documents they commend to the member churches.

Change and Authority

Both examples illustrate that change in the church is related to the understanding and practice of authority in the church. In the AC where the provinces are autonomous and regulate doctrinal questions and ecumenical relations independently, the debate is about the "moral" authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the authority of primates and bishops in times of change. As a conference of bishops, the Lambeth Conference holds a certain moral and spiritual authority and its resolutions are influential, but they do not carry legislative authority.

The situation is different in the LWF and its member churches. Unlike the Archbishop of Canterbury, neither the LWF General Secretary nor the President hold "moral authority". There is no conference of bishops in the LWF. It is the General Assembly that has the highest decision-making authority.[26] At the Assembly, the delegates of the member churches elect the members of Council which decides on finances, staff, and programs. It further appoints commissions, receives theological reports and ecumenical dialogues and commends them to the member churches for study and reception. The Executive Committee oversees the proper functioning of

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[24] *The Self-Understanding of the Lutheran Communion. A Study Document* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, 2015).

[25] Ibid., 25.

[26] As the principal authority of the LWF, the Assembly is responsible e.g. for the Constitution, gives general direction to the work of the Federation, and elects the President (cf. https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/assembly (accessed January 10, 2020)).

the LWF between Council meetings.[27] Yet, neither the Council nor the Executive Committee has legislative authority. The authority lies with the member churches and their leadership structures such as synods and bishops. One could call it the *tremendum et fascinosum* of the Lutheran Communion that the decisions of the Assembly and the Council are de facto not binding for member churches and that their implementation de facto depends on the good will of member churches.

In its composition the LWF Council is more comparable to the ACC which is composed of lay and ordained members from all over the AC. The decision to allocate responsibility for ecumenical dialogues to the ACC (rather than the Lambeth Conference) implies a change in the practice of the teaching office in the AC. Before the ACC takes decisions, relevant documents are discussed by IASCUFO (Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order).[28]

Change challenges authority structures. Although the challenges for the AC and the LWF are similar, different developments have occurred in both communions. This is not only due to different structures of authority, but also due to non-doctrinal factors such as colonial history. As change will continue to challenge churches and global communions, questions emerge regarding what kind of understanding of authority would be helpful for encountering change. In times of globalization and fragmentation, when global communions struggle to hold churches and communities together, Ellen K. Wondra's understanding of authority in the Anglican tradition is helpful, as she proposes a theology of authority that allows and facilitates change.[29] Wondra argues for an understanding of authority in the church which is, at its base, fundamentally communal, relational and dispersed rather than juridical and focused.[30] For her, authority in the church "belongs to the whole people of God"[31] as it is the "baptismal call [that] authorizes participation in mission, ministry, and the councils of the

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[27] Cf. https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2018/documents/lwf_constitution_en.pdf; https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/2019/documents/lwf_bylaws_en.pdf (accessed January 10, 2020).

[28] http://www.anglicancommunion.org/ecumenism/iascufo.aspx (accessed January 10, 2020).

[29] Cf. Ellen K. Wondra, *Questioning Authority. The Theology and Practice of Authority in the Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2018).

[30] Ibid., 11.

[31] Ibid., 280.

church".[32] Authority must be claimed and received and every exercise of authority must take place "within a communal framework of shared understanding, commitment, and aspiration".[33] Wondra emphasizes that authority "is conferred to serve communion, and it must be configured in line with what it serves."[34] Her theology of authority invites communions to deal with change in a way that does not divide them, but encourages them to embrace diversity, recognize and respect others' perspectives, and to work together to discover and create common ground.

[32] Ibid., 280.
[33] Ibid., 11.
[34] Ibid., 11.

"Stop, Stop and Listen": Changing the Church by Listening to Its Life

Andrew Pierce

Irish poet Austin Clarke deposits a bucket of ice-cold nature over the ecclesial grace of the monk, Patric, as the blackbird of Derrycairn sings:

> Stop, stop and listen for the bough top
> Is whistling and the sun is brighter
> Than God's own shadow in the cup now![1]

How might the official ecclesiological self-understanding of the Anglican Communion benefit from heeding a call to stop and listen?

Recently, Anglicans have begun to use a distinctive language to describe themselves—both to themselves and to their ecumenical partners. The Anglican Communion, it is claimed, is one communion with four instruments of communion. But, no matter how often some Anglicans repeat this mantra, its persuasive power seems limited: It is a very new way in which to express "Anglicanity", and its connection to what went before is

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[1] "The Blackbird of Derrycairn", in Austin Clarke*: Selected Poems*, edited by Hugh Maxton (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1991), 40.

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unclear; theologically it is remarkably underdressed; and, despite its appearances in Anglican Communion publications, it seems to have garnered little traction across the churches of the Communion. Since reception is a live ecumenical issue, Anglicans might benefit from the blackbird's edict to shut up and listen to what is actually going on, and not continue to prescribe what some think ought to be happening. Changing the Church should mean something other than enforcing a fiction.

The Thematizing of Dispersed Authority

Anglicanism has undergone—to use the terminology of William L. Sachs—a dramatic "transformation" in its self-understanding from "state church to global communion."[2] The current characteristic usage of "Anglican Communion" dates only from the nineteenth century. Before that, anachronistic Anglicans would have claimed a unity in their heritage of the state-sponsored reforms of the English church under Tudors and Stuarts, and on the expanding role played by that church during the development of British colonies overseas. Connections and confusions between catholicity and colonialism are not unique to Anglicanism. The decoupling of the colonizer and colonized has been, and remains, a deeply fraught process with many aspects—including the theological. The expansion of a distinctive and developing theological identity, from the Church of England to at least some of the ends of the earth, leaves in its wake a need to make ecclesiological sense of the resulting "transformation."

Attempts to curtail the risk of ecclesiological anarchy are nicely symbolized by the first Lambeth Conference in 1867. Prodded into action by the church overseas, a reluctant Archbishop of Canterbury invited "all" 144 bishops of the Communion. Not all bishops saw this as wise—only half of those invited attended, the Archbishop of York famously opted out, and the Dean of Westminster refused to host the final service of the Conference in Westminster Abbey. The Conference tried to balance the evident need of Canadian Anglicans to take counsel more widely, with the extreme caution on the part of Anglican leadership in naming what—ecclesiologically speaking—was actually happening.

Despite initial nervousness, Anglicans have grown more comfortable with having their bishops meet every 10 years or so, and with these

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[2] William L. Sachs, *The Transformation of Anglicanism: From State Church to Global Communion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

deliberations claiming nothing other than a moral authority in the churches of the Anglican Communion. Some Lambeth actions have been momentous and full of consequences for the churches—for example, the appeal for Christian unity in 1920 and the acceptance of artificial methods of contraception in 1958.[3] Other concerns of bishops, by their very recurrence, suggest an imbalance between vision and reality—for instance, frequently expressed episcopal *angst*—over the need for better biblical study in the churches of the Communion.[4]

There is something intrinsically vulnerable in the character of this gathering: it incarnates a certain practice of authority, and part of that practice entails a subtle dialectic of affirmation and denial concerning its ability to speak to and for the church, both locally and globally. At an experiential level, other factors shaped the common life of the churches of the Anglican Communion; prior to its contextual revisions, the Book of Common Prayer, most obviously, embodied a widely dispersed distillation of liturgy and doctrine. The Lambeth Conference, however, provided an opportunity for a living, focused and deliberative encounter in the life of the Communion.

The notion of "dispersal" is a key term in the understanding of authority commended by the Lambeth Conference in 1948, in a report concerning "The Anglican Communion":

> Authority, as inherited by the Anglican Communion from the undivided Church of the early centuries of the Christian era, is single in that it is derived from a single Divine source, and reflects within itself the richness and historicity of the divine Revelation, the authority of the Eternal Father, the incarnate Son, and the life-giving Spirit. It is distributed among Scriptures, Tradition, Creeds, the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, the witness of saints, and the *consensus fidelium*, which is the continuing experience of the Holy Spirit through His faithful people in the Church. It is thus a dispersed rather than a centralized authority having many elements which combine, interact with, and check each other; these elements together constituting a process of mutual support, mutual checking and redressing of errors or

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[3] 'An Appeal to All Christian People: From the Bishops Assembled in the Lambeth Conference of 1920', in *Lambeth Conferences (1867–1930): The Reports of the 1920 and 1930 Conferences, with selected resolutions from the Conferences of 1867, 1878, 1888, 1897 and 1908*, London: S.P.C.K., 1948, 119–24; 'The Family in Contemporary Society,' in *The Lambeth Conference 1958: The Encyclical Letter from the Bishops together with the Resolutions and Reports*, London: S.P.C.K., 1958, 141–71.

[4] For example, see Lambeth 1930, Resolutions 3, 5–7; Lambeth 1958, Resolutions 1–12.

exaggerations to the many-sided fullness of the authority which Christ committed to His Church. Where this authority of Christ is to be found mediated not in one mode but in several we recognize in this multiplicity God's loving provision against the temptations to tyranny and the dangers of unchecked power.[5]

This statement reappears regularly in reflections on the kind of authority that the Anglican Communion hopes both to detect and to re-inscribe within its life. It enjoins patient discernment of the theological significance of the checks and balances administered through historical experience. "Listening" to this experience of ecclesial life provides the materials out of which the distinctiveness of Anglicanism is given theological shape. Concerning such an Anglican theology, Rowan Williams remarks that "the discovery of it may require some patience in reading and attending to a number of historical strands, in order to watch the way in which distinctiveness shows itself."[6] Whether one's metaphorical preference is to watch or to listen, disciplined observation of the church and its practice of authority is woven into the diachronic emphasis of Anglican self-understanding.

Dispersed Authority in Search of Global Coherence

The Lambeth Conference of 1968 marks the beginning of a period of accelerating developments in the Anglican Communion's attempts to order its common life. In his opening sermon to the bishops, Archbishop Michael Ramsey presented a strikingly simple account of how they were held together by the providential accidents of history:

Today we have all come to Canterbury with hearts full of thankfulness for a place, a man, and a history. This place means very much to us as we think of St Augustine and his monks coming here from Thanet with the cross borne before them, preaching the Gospel to King and people, and inaugurating a history which includes not only the English Church in its continuity through

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[5] *The Lambeth Conference 1948: The Encyclical Letter from the Bishops; together with Resolutions and Reports* (London: SPCK, 1948), Part II, 84–85.

[6] Rowan Williams, *Anglican Identities* (London: SPCK, 2004), 1. Williams' treatment of these "identities" focuses on the Church of England; it ranges diachronically from William Tyndale to John A. T. Robinson.

the centuries, but a family of Churches of many countries and races which still see in Canterbury a symbol and a bond.[7]

The Anglican narration of identity, *à la* Ramsey, is irreducibly diachronic, weaving together the scandalous particularities of sustained interconnection between people, places, and histories. And people, places, and histories, together with their mutual interactions, are suffused with theological significance since they embody the tradition of the gospel.

With increasing numbers of Anglican Christians around the globe, from the 1960s onwards, attempts to ensure greater connectivity among the churches gathered apace. The Anglican Consultative Council—or ACC—came into being after Lambeth 1968, and since then has gathered a more representative body (bishops, priests, and laypeople) to meet every 2 or 3 years. Ten years later, the Primates of the various autonomous provinces began meeting every 2 years. A permanent secretariat, based in London, was established to support the ACC—a later revision of these arrangements produced a Secretary General to the Anglican Communion, based at an Anglican Communion Office.

More recently, an important body known as the Standing Committee has emerged, which meets annually and which includes representatives of both the Primates' Meeting and the ACC. Had the plans for a communion-wide "covenant" not collapsed during its implementation, this body was intended to exercise significant power in the future interpretation of the proposed Anglican Covenant.

Historically, therefore, the *dramatis personae* of inter-Anglican relations include an Archbishop of Canterbury, a Lambeth Conference since 1867, together with a raft of post-1960s structures—an Anglican Consultative Council since 1968, a secretariat with a Secretary General, a Primates' Meeting since 1978, and a Standing Committee since 2010. Despite the rhapsodizing of Lambeth 1948, eliciting order out of complexity favors some degree of centralizing. And that raises a question—or at least it should—about how Anglicans might honor the demands of their alleged preference for dispersal over centralization. Instead, however, Anglicans have moved in a different direction.

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[7] Cited in James B. Simpson and Edward M. Story, *The Long Shadows of Lambeth X: A Critical, Eye-Witness account of the tenth Decennial Conference of 462 Bishops of the Anglican Communion* (New York, Toronto, London and Sydney: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969), 1–2.

From Diachronic to Synchronic
Self-Understandings

Much of this centralizing thrust arises circumstantially. The current challenge to Anglican unity and diversity is often dated to 1998 when the Lambeth Conference passed its remarkably incoherent Resolution 1.10 on human sexuality. This resolution sets the scene for recent developments in the Anglican Communion and has both built on and massaged the tensions within the Communion that had been generated—and that continues to be generated—by the ordination of women priests and bishops. And it is in the attempts to prepare itself for the challenge of receiving women bishops and priests into its wider practices of authority—particularly at Lambeth 1988—that the Communion underwent developments pregnant with consequences.

With an eye to events the following year, ACC 7, meeting in Singapore in 1987 received a report, which is commended to the bishops due to meet at the Lambeth Conference 1988. Entitled "Unity in Diversity Within the Anglican Communion: A Way Forward," the report opens with two (seemingly unselfconsciously) ironic paragraphs:

1. This is a discussion paper. It does not explore the theological implications of authority, but rather focuses on the way authority is experienced in the Anglican Communion.
2. By tradition there are four instruments for maintaining the unity in diversity of the Anglican Communion:

   The Archbishop of Canterbury.
   The Lambeth Conference.
   The Anglican Consultative Council.
   The Meeting of Primates.[8]

Paragraph 1 claims to leave aside theological accounts of authority (and, with it, *ergo*, history). Paragraph 2 invokes both history and

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[8] *Many Gifts, One Spirit: Report of ACC-7: Singapore 1987* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 1987), 129–134, 129. Theologians may detect a worrying contrast between "theological implications of authority" on the one hand, and "the way authority is experienced within the Anglican Communion" on the other.

theology—on stilts—to state that the following claim has been acknowledged to be the case "By tradition."

Here is a dramatic shifting of the grounds on which Anglicanism claims to understand itself. A single sentence dispatches the diachronic narrative of Anglican ecclesiological self-understanding, replacing it with what is essentially a structuralist reading of how the thing called Anglicanism is apparently held together. The hitherto traditional attempt to grasp complex relationships between places, persons, and histories is thus replaced by the newly traditional charting of inter-instrumental dynamics. Not surprisingly, therefore, inter-Anglican debate and discussion about what is and what is not Anglican have focused on power relations within and between these instruments.

When the ACC Report reached the Lambeth Conference in 1988, its connection to significant issues of concerning the exercise of power as well as the practice of authority was clear (despite its earlier claim to prescind from such theological matters); it now bore the amended title "Instruments of Communion and Decision-Making: The Development of the Consultative Process in the Anglican Communion."[9]

Significantly, the document now also included a proposal that individual churches of the communion consider the adoption of a common "Declaration." The proposed declaration highlighted the relationship among the churches of the Anglican Communion, and it was suggested that it might profitably be declared on occasions when the inter-connection between churches was most visible, at, for example, the consecration of a bishop or archbishop. The point of the declaration was to make explicit in the life of a diocese and of a church that it belonged within a wider context of mutual responsibility. The wording of the proposed declaration appealed specifically to the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, thus retaining the balance exhibited in that text for Anglican ecumenism *ad intra et ad extra*. The declaration did not include the possibility of disciplinary consequences for those who, having declared, now acted inconsistently with that earlier declaration. It was also acknowledged, at Lambeth, that this proposed Declaration might in time come to function as a fifth instrument of unity.

Within the space of a single year, the Anglican tradition had thus "officially" sped from having one "focus" of unity to four "instruments" of

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[9] *The Truth Shall Make You Free: The Lambeth Conference 1988: The Reports, Resolutions & Pastoral Letters from the Bishops* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 1988), Appendix 5, 293–298.

communion—with the prospect of a fifth warming-up at the side of the pitch.

THE PROBLEM OF RECEPTION—IS ANYONE LISTENING?

The failure of the declaration—a suggested template was included in the report presented to the bishops in 1988—to mature into a binding Anglican Covenant, following the Windsor Report in 2004, merits careful scrutiny. A trawl of key documentation (through Singapore in 1987, Lambeth 1988, Lambeth 1998, the Windsor Commission and on to the Covenant Design Group), would suggest that readers are in the presence of a relatively logical set of developments, characterized by remarkable consensus regarding both the nature of the task and the appropriate materials available for its completion. Yet the thing would not take-off. The problem faced by the Covenant was its failure to generate an assenting echo across the whole Communion. Something is seriously awry when vast energies are expended on a prototype that excites only the manufacturer's design team.

It is also significant that serious Communion-wide reflections on theology came unstuck at the very time that churches became explicitly aware of their participation in an instrumentally synchronized Communion. An Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Communion had been established, issuing its first report in 1986, in which there was a serious attempt to engage in an explicitly contextual theology for a multi-contextual Communion.[10] Its next report, however, produced at Virginia in preparation for the 1998 Lambeth Conference, moved away from the difficulties of addressing context and attempted to provide the post-Singapore account of one Communion plus four Instruments of Communion with some kind of recognizable theology of the church.

Out of all the churches of the Anglican Communion, only two responded to the Virginia Report—both negatively. And yet, despite this reception and the failure of the Covenant, the direction of ecclesiological travel continues, undaunted, to follow the map drawn at Singapore. There is, evidently, an ecclesiological elephant in the room: officially, Anglicans are calling themselves one thing, but the evidence suggests that they do not believe what is said. Following his experience of the Lambeth Conference in 1998, David F. Ford noted how "the failure to articulate a

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[10] *For the Sake of the Kingdom* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 1986).

complex, historically realistic identity left the field open to more neatly packaged notions."[11] Bad ecclesiology is a costly business for all concerned, and Ford's wording points clearly to what remains lacking.

Austin Clarke's blackbird chastised "Patric" for his restricted vision of the church of God, and directed him towards unexpected sources of wisdom: "But knowledge is found among the branches."[12] Heeding the message to stop and listen, Anglicans might learn to attend more accurately to the life of their Communion and, perhaps, learn something from the silence that so many endeavors have called forth.

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[11] David F. Ford, "Preface," in Stephen R. White, ed., *A Time to Build: Essays for Tomorrow's Church* (Dublin: APCK, 1999), 7–8, here 8.

[12] "The Blackbird of Derrycairn", in Austin Clarke, *Selected* Poems, 40.

How Should the Church Teach? A Mode of Learning and Teaching for Our Times

Peter C. Phan

The purpose of this chapter is to develop further my own understanding of the magisterium.[1] Given limited space, there is no need to provide an overview of the Catholic Church's teaching on the nature of episcopal magisterium (the prophetic function of the Church), its subjects (who can teach), its proper subject matter (what can be taught), and its modes

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[1] For my past reflections on the magisterium, see Peter C. Phan, "From Magisterium to Magisteria: Recent Theologies of the Learning and Teaching Functions of the Church," *Theological Studies*, 80, no. 2 (2019): 393–413; *The Joy of Religious Pluralism: A Personal Journey* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 21–49; "Teaching as Learning: An Asian View," *Concilium*, no. 2 (2012): 75–87; "The Church in Asian Perspective," in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, edited by Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 275–290; "A New Way of Being Church in Asia: Lessons for the American Catholic Church," in *Inculturation and the Church in North America*, edited by Frank Kennedy (New York: Crossroad, 2006), 145–62; "A New Way of Being Church: Perspectives from Asia," in *Governance, Accountability, and the Future of the Catholic Church*, edited by Francis Oakley and Bruce Russett (New York: Continuum, 2004), 178–90.

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(infallible and authoritative but non-infallible).[2] Instead, I will highlight certain aspects of the traditional theology of the magisterium that in my judgment should be reconsidered and modified so that the Church's teaching function can be exercised in a fruitful and credible way. I will conclude by showing how Pope Francis has inaugurated a new way of papal teaching.

Teaching Function of the Hierarchy or the Prophetic Role of the Whole Church?

The first widespread ambiguity to be dispelled is the notion of "magisterium" itself. Etymologically, it means the teaching role or the act of teaching itself of a teacher (*magister*). That one of the most important parts of Jesus' ministry is teaching and that he was called a "teacher" or "rabbi" by his contemporaries is beyond doubt. Furthermore, there is also no doubt that after his resurrection Jesus commissioned his disciples to "teach" all nations to obey and observe everything he had commanded them (Matt. 28:20).

What is theologically problematic is the process whereby this teaching function, which the whole Church, symbolized in Matthew as the "eleven disciples," and not just the apostles, is commissioned to perform, is gradually restricted to mean exclusively the teaching role and the teachings themselves of the apostles and of their presumed successors, that is, the bishops, or the episcopal or hierarchical magisterium. Eventually a distinction was made between the "teaching Church" (*ecclesia docens*) and the "learning Church" (*ecclesia discens*), the former composed of the pope and bishops, and the latter of the laity, who are reduced to being "students" or learners of their "teachers," namely the pope and bishops. As a result, *magisterium* comes to refer exclusively to the teaching function of the pope and the bishops. To underscore this point, English usage retains the Latin term "magisterium" untranslated and adds the definite article *the* to "Magisterium," with M capitalized. Thus, the phrase "*the* Magisterium of

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[2] For a comprehensive exposition on the magisterium, see Francis Sullivan, *Magisterium: Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), Michael A. Fahey, "Magisterium," in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, edited by Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 524–535; and the many works by Richard Gaillardetz, especially *Teaching with Authority: A Theology of the Magisterium in the Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997).

the Church" is commonly understood to mean the teaching function of the pope and bishops, the only kind of teaching existing in the Church. Furthermore, adjectives such as "sacred" and "solemn" are often attached to the term to highlight the divine source of this episcopal or hierarchical magisterium.

Even Vatican II's much-vaunted Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (*Dei Verbum*), though discarding the distinction between *ecclesia docens* and *ecclesia discens*, in speaking of the transmission of divine revelation (Chap. II), still repeatedly attributes the teaching role in the Church exclusively to the apostles and their successors, with no recognition whatsoever of the teaching role of the laity on matters of faith and morals.[3] In its most authoritative document on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) the council does affirm that "to the extent of their knowledge, competence or authority the laity are entitled, and indeed sometimes duty-bound, to express their opinion on matters which concern the good of the Church" (no. 37). However, this affirmation of the duty of the laity to "express their opinion" is immediately followed by an insistence on their obedience to the hierarchy: "Like all the faithful, the laity should promptly accept in Christian obedience what is decided by the pastors who, as teachers and rulers of the Church, represent Christ" (no. 37). Clearly, "express their opinion" while being urged to promptly obey their pastors does not imply a genuine exercise on the part of the laity of the teaching magisterium which Christ enjoins upon them in matters of faith and morals, and not just in secular matters, in which they possess a much higher expertise than the hierarchy.

Perhaps this exclusive reservation of the magisterium to bishops might be justified in the past when theological learning was the preserve of

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[3] For example, no. 7: "Christ the Lord […] commanded the apostles to preach it [the Gospel] to everyone as the source of all saving truth and moral law […]. In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them 'their own position of teaching authority.'" Again, no. 10: "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the church alone." It may be argued that *Dei Verbum* specifies "interpretation of the word of God" with "authentic"—the Latin *authenticum* is better translated as "authoritative"—and reserves it to the episcopal magisterium and as such does not deny other types of interpretation. Even granted this qualification, there is no doubt that "teaching office of the church" refers to that of the bishops. The English translation of Vatican II's documents is taken from *Vatican II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 2007).

bishops and theologians who were almost all male members of the clergy and religious orders. When heresies arose, bishops met in ecumenical councils to deliberate, condemn errors, and formulate orthodox doctrines, almost always without collaboration with and contribution of the laity. Even Thomas Aquinas's celebrated distinction between *magisterium cathedrae pastoralis* (the teaching function of bishops) and *magisterium cathedrae magistralis* (the teaching function of theologians), while helpful in acknowledging the two different kinds of the teaching office in the church and distinguishing their distinctive areas of competence, does not recognize the possibility of the laity as teachers of the faith.[4]

Today, the scientific, cultural, social, and intellectual contexts no longer permit ignoring the magisterium of the laity. For one thing, the fields in which the teaching role of the Church in matters of faith and morals is exercised, for instance, economics, medicine, technology, artificial intelligence, and ecology, to name a few, have become so complex that there is no way bishops, and even professional theologians, can understand them fully and on this knowledge formulate an adequate, let alone infallible, teaching. Furthermore, there exists today no commonly accepted philosophy, such as Platonism and Aristotelianism, that offers a system of thought and a lingua franca in which to express Christian beliefs. At best, with the contribution of the laity, they can provide guidelines and provisional answers, born out of prudential judgment rather than certain and definitive knowledge.

Furthermore, today the laity not only have become highly competent experts of international reputation in secular fields of knowledge but have also distinguished themselves in disciplines hitherto reserved for the clergy and religious such as Biblical studies, church history, systematic theology, and ethics, and are recognized as credentialed experts by their peers. In virtue of their scholarly training and competence, these laypersons do not simply "express their opinions" to bishops in matters of faith and morals and must be ready to "obey" their teachings. Rather, as theologians occupy the *magisterium cathedrae magistralis*, the laity are qualified to propose credible and well-supported answers to problems of faith and morals. It is true that being a theologian as such does not require the

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[4] Thomas Aquinas's distinction of the two kinds of the magisterium is predicated upon his distinction between two functions: *praelatio* (governance by bishops) and *magisterium* (teaching by theologians). For Thomas, *praelatio* does not exclude teaching; hence, *magisterium cathedrae pastoralis*.

clerical or religious status. However, de facto, theologians of ages past, as mentioned above, were by and large priests and religious. Thus, the laity, especially lay theologians, must be regarded as constituting a different category of teachers of faith and morals. They must be said to possess what may be called the *magisterium cathedrae laicalis*. In this way, the magisterium truly belongs to the whole Church, and not just an exclusive caste whose members are exbishops and priestly or religious male theologians.

Teaching or Witnessing? Knowledge and Life

The second ambiguity in the current Catholic theology of the magisterium lies in its conception of the modes of teaching. Because the magisterium is commonly understood in terms of formulating a doctrine, proclaiming it verbally, and commanding assent, there has been a veritable cottage industry dedicated to distinguishing the various objects of teaching ("faith and morals," revealed truths, and truths of reason that are connected with and necessary for defined dogmas), various degrees of teaching (e.g., infallible versus non-infallible, and a more recent invention of "definitive" teaching), modes of teaching (extraordinary, ordinary universal, and ordinary and authoritative), and various kinds of assent appropriate to different kinds of teaching (assent of faith to revealed truths and infallibly defined dogmas, firm and irrevocable assent to "definitive" teachings, and religious *obsequium* of will and intellect to ordinary and authoritative teachings). Truth be told, these distinctions, necessary as they are, do appear to non-specialists as needles on which angels dance.

This model of teaching is heavily legalistic and consists mainly of verbal declarations, the most well-known genre of which is papal encyclicals. There is, however, another model of teaching which is made up not of words but personal example. Teaching in this way is personal witnessing. Personal witnessing is born of first *learning* the truths and then *appropriating* them in one's life. Witnessing is teaching by one's life, by means of words if necessary, and always with deeds. The *authority* of teaching by witnessing does not depend on the canonical *power* of the teacher (pope, bishops, and theologians with the *mandatum*) but on the willingness to suffer martyrdom (*martyria,* which means witnessing) for the sake of the truth.

Today, in the wake of the sex-abuse scandals and the way church authorities have dealt with them, the laity and the public at large may be forgiven for being highly suspicious of any claim on the part of the

episcopal magisterium to teach authoritatively, let alone infallibly, in moral matters. The reason is not that they deny bishops the right to teach. Rather they do not put faith in their teachings because the teachers do not and seemingly refuse to *learn*—from experience, the sufferings of the victims, the voice of the faithful, the advice of the experts they themselves appointed, the courts, the police, and the press. They teach but do not learn. They do not teach *as* learners. Their voice is not their own, coming, as it should, from continual and assiduous learning, but functions merely as a voice-over of their ecclesiastical superiors. This is also true—mutatis mutandis—of theologians. These teachers tend to speak from bookish knowledge—the proverbial ivory tower—and are not immune from the danger of seeing themselves mainly as teachers (or better, "professors" and "doctors"), especially since their professional identity is canonically defined by the license to teach "in the name of the church" (the *mandatum* granted by the local bishop, who ironically may not possess theological competence), and not by the constantly cultivated desire to learn.

Above all, the lack of credibility on the part of episcopal magisterium is due to the lack of witnessing by bishops who in their personal lives do not reflect the values of the reign of God. Stories of luxurious living, expensive tastes in travels and foods and drinks, and even of sexual abuses keep seeping out in the media, destroying the bits of teaching authority that remain.

Here, to the episcopal magisterium and the magisterium of the theologians (ordained and lay), we must add the magisterium of the poor, whose lives proclaim God's preferential option for the poor as demonstrated in the life and ministry of Jesus. Theirs is the *magisterium cathedrae vitae*, which teaches not by words but by witnessing, perhaps the only kind of teaching that carries weight and authority.

Christian and Non-Christian Magisteria?

Lastly, in our contemporary world of religious pluralism, there is another important magisterium. A number of theologians, especially those working on religious pluralism, have proposed the "magisterium of believers of other religions" (*magisterium cathedrae non-christianae* if you will) since in their view the Spirit of God is actively present as the agent of salvation

in their sacred books, religious beliefs, moral teachings, spiritual practices, monastic traditions, and so forth, from which Christians must learn.[5]

POPE FRANCIS AND THE NEW TEACHING STYLE

The intention of this concluding section is not to offer a full-fledged exposition of how Pope Francis understands the teaching function of the church, including papal magisterium, and how he has exercised it, much less a report card on his six-year-old pontificate. Rather it seeks to show how Pope Francis has inaugurated change by adopting a new style of teaching.

Perhaps the first and most striking feature in the history of papal magisterium is Pope Francis's frequent and extensive use of free-wheeling interviews to convey his thoughts on important theological issues.[6] He is not afraid of letting the questioners, mostly secular journalists, to set the agenda of the conversation instead of controlling or managing it; in this way, he gives answers to the real questions that actually concern people instead of offering well-worn answers to questions that are not even asked. In these wide-ranging question-and-answer conversations Francis is not averse to speaking his mind on controversial subjects of the day on which the magisterium does not yet or cannot have a well-defined teaching. There is of course the risk of misunderstanding, being taken out of context, being reduced to soundbites, or incomplete answers, given the constraints of time, but it is a risk worth taking if the Gospel is to reach people

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[5] See, for instance, Paul Knitter, *Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2013); Paul Knitter and Roger Haight, *Jesus & Buddha: Friends in Conversation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2015); Peter C. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2014); idem, "*Sensus Fidelium, Dissensius Infidelium, Consensus* Omnium," in "*Learning from* All *the Faithful*," edited by Bradford Hinze and Peter C. Phan, 213–25; Aloysius Pieris, *Love Meets Wisdom: A Christian Experience of Buddhism* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989); and Ruben Habito, *Zen and the Spiritual Exercises* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2013).

[6] Perhaps the most celebrated interview was that conducted by Antonio Spadaro, SJ, editor-in-chief of *La Civiltá Cattolica*, on August 19, 2013. The English text is available in *America*, September 30, 2013 at https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2013/09/30/big-heart-open-god-interview-pope-francis (accessed February 17, 2020) Another important interview is Francis's conversation with reporters aboard the papal plane on his flight back from Brazil to Rome on July 29, 2013 reported at: https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/pope-homosexuals-who-am-i-judge (accessed February 17, 2020)

in their real lives. There is an added benefit to this style of teaching as the Pope's answers and explanations inevitably provoke the listeners to think *further* and *more* about the issues and will hopefully come to a deeper understanding on their own. With wry irony, Francis notes: "I am aware that nowadays documents do not arouse the same interest as in the past and that they are quickly forgotten" (*Laudato Si,'* no. 25).[7]

Open and honest conversation through question-and-answer exchanges with the audience may be seen as a new style of exercising the magisterium that is appropriate for our postmodern times when claims of anyone or any institution to possess certain and exclusive knowledge on everything are immediately suspect. In this pedagogic method, the teacher, not unlike Socrates, humbly acknowledges his or her ignorance, and instead of spouting forth hallowed but irrelevant formulas, attempts to midwife the shared wisdom of the community.

Writing on the duty to save our common home from ecological destruction, Pope Francis notes that he explores many issues "which call for further reflection and study" and then adds: "Nor do I believe that the papal magisterium should be expected to offer a definitive or complete word on every question which affects the Church and the world" (*Laudato Si,'* no. 16). Further on, he stresses the need for doctrinal pluralism and flexibility:

> Differing currents of thought in philosophy, theology and pastoral practice, if open to being reconciled by the Spirit in respect and love, can enable the Church to grow, since all of them help to express more clearly the immense riches of God's word. For those who long for a monolithic body of doctrine guarded by all and having no room for nuance, this might appear as undesirable and leading to confusion. (*Laudato Si'*, no. 40)

As for the church itself, Francis says that he prefers "a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security" (*Laudato Si'* 49). In this "bruised, hurting and dirty" church, a different mode of teaching is called for. Teachers of the faith must remember that

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[7] For an English translation of *Laudato Si'* (May 24, 2015), see the Vatican translation at the Libreria Editrice Vaticana at: http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (accessed February 17, 2020).

there are times when the faithful, in listening to completely orthodox language, take away something alien to the authentic Gospel of Jesus Christ, because that language is alien to their own way of speaking to and understanding each other. With the holy intent of communicating the truth about God and humanity, we sometimes give them a false god or a human ideal which is not really Christian. In this way, we hold fast to a formulation while failing to convey its substance. (*Laudato Si'*, no. 41)

Lastly, there is a matter of language. Francis teaches in simple, clear, accessible, and even homey language. Expressions such as bishops, priests, and other church leaders "with the smell of the sheep," the church as "field hospital," and "Who am I to judge?" have percolated through church speak to express a radical change in the understanding of ministry, church, and moral attitude.

CHAPTER 33

Towards a Re-reading of the Dogmas of Vatican I

Peter Neuner

The Philosophical and Spiritual Climate

It was 150 years ago that the Catholic Church was moved by the First Vatican Council (1869–1870).[1] Its documents and especially the papal dogmas can be understood only in the context of the history of the nineteenth century. This century began with the French revolution, whose ideals of *liberté, egalité, and fraternité* were rapidly suppressed by the blood frenzy of the mob. The September massacres of 1792, when 1200 captives, among them 300 priests, were murdered in the dungeons of Paris, along with the parliament's decision to abolish Christianity (1793), were heavy challenges for the church. The French military occupied the Papal States; in 1799 the mortally ill Pope Pius VI was dragged across the

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[1] On this, see some recent historical investigations: Manfred Weitlauff, *Das Erste Vatikanum (1869/70) wurde ihnen zum Schicksal* (2 vols.) (München: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2018); Bernward Schmidt, *Kleine Geschichte des Ersten Vatikanischen Konzils* (Freiburg: Herder, 2019). See also: Peter Neuner, *Der lange Schatten des I. Vatikanums* (Freiburg: Herder, 2019).

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Alpes to Grenoble and Valence, where his death ended this macabre spectacle. Moreover, the philosophical climate changed. In the second part of the nineteenth century, tendencies prevailed which were critical of religion, and history unsettled the trust in miracles and divinely ordained authorities.

It is not surprising that the Popes condemned these events. However, they also rejected the theoretical concepts that, according to their view of history, made them possible. They were convinced that the ideas of modern times were the root of all these catastrophes. They supported a neoscholastic approach, which seemed to be untouched by the changes of history.[2] They regarded Martin Luther as responsible for all the catastrophes of modernity.[3] His rebellion against the God-ordained authorities, the Pope, and the Emperor caused the breakdown of society and unity of the Church. The false ideas of the fatal monk of Wittenberg, according to the official catholic view of history, had the consequence that everybody became their own teacher, priest, and pope. Luther's principles of freedom and autonomy led to destruction and chaos. Catholic authorities were convinced that there was only one remedy for religion and even for society: the return to the medieval order of authority and obedience.[4]

The individual character of the popes brought an additional step. Thus, Pope Gregory XVI condemned everything that was in contact with modernity and liberalism, especially what he denounced as indifferentism: "From this most rotten source of indifferentism flows that absurd and erroneous opinion, or rather insanity, that liberty of conscience must be claimed and defended for anyone".[5] His successor, Pope Pius IX declared in his encyclical letter *Quanta cura* (1864) the conviction that the liberty of conscience is the right of everybody and that civil law has to protect it as sheer foolishness. The Syllabus of Errors, an attachment to this encyclical, condemned the statement: "The Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile and adapt himself to progress, liberalism and the modern civilization".[6]

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[2] See Heinrich M. Schmidinger, "Neuscholastik", in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* edited by Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), volume 6, 769.

[3] See Neuner, *Der lange Schatten*, 18.

[4] Hermann Josef Pottmeyer, *Der Glaube vor dem Anspruch der Wissenschaft* (Freiburg Herder, 1968).

[5] Encyclical, *Mirari vos*, Denzinger, no 2730.

[6] *Syllabus Errorum*, Denzinger, no 2980.

The Syllabus produced a bombshell effect. Liberal newspapers regarded it as a declaration of war against modern society and democracy. They questioned whether Catholics, especially bishops, could be loyal citizens in democratic societies.[7] Catholicism and Modernity seemed to be incompatible. Ernst Troeltsch wrote that the Catholic Church intruded into the modern world like a huge foreign body.[8] This was the atmosphere in which Pope Pius IX convoked the Vatican Council (1869–1870).

Authority and Obedience as Leitmotifs

Recent investigations could demonstrate that from the beginning, Pius IX had the intention that the council should declare papal infallibility, notwithstanding the fact that about 140 of the 700 bishops of the council objected to this idea. The critical minority consisted of the majority of the bishops from Germany, a very great number from France and America, and some from Italy. They were afraid of the consequences of such a dogma for the relation of the Church to society. Thus, they regarded it as "inopportune."[9] Others opposed for historical reasons: The early Church did neither teach nor practice papal infallibility. Since the Christian message is "*quod semper, ubique et ab omnibus creditum est*" (what was believed always, everywhere and by everybody) papal infallibility would be a "new dogma," and that is equivalent to heresy. In particular, it was Ignaz von Döllinger, the Munich Church historian, who polemicized against the dogma, which he regarded as a break with the fundamentals of the Christian Church. In the statement by Pope Pius that "I am the tradition" he saw a break with the *regula fidei*, the foundation of the Church.[10] In future, Catholics would no longer believe what had been the Christian message throughout the centuries, but what the Pope was proposing.

Nevertheless, the majority of the bishops were convinced that only the strongest insistence on authority and obedience would be an appropriate

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[7] Especially during Bismarck's "*Kulturkampf*" Catholics were treated as second-class citizens.

[8] Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte*, cited in: Neuner, *Der lange Schatten*, 18.

[9] This was the view of the German bishops in a pastoral letter: Cuthbert Butler and Hugo Lang, *Das I. Vatikanische Konzil* (München: Kösel 1961), 99.

[10] Ignaz von Döllinger, *Briefe und Erklärungen über die Vatikanischen Dekrete 1869–1887* (München 1890, Reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1968), 30.

remedy to the maladies of the time. Both documents of the council tried to give an answer to the challenges of modern times. The dogmatic constitution *Dei Filius* regards faith as obedience to the divine revelation, as the Church presents it.[11] There was not a single word about how the act of faith helps Christians to live and that the Christian message presents an answer to human hopes and aspirations. Faith appears predominantly as a burden one has to endure because of the authority of the revelation and the hierarchy of the Church.

This concept of authority is even more dominant in the second document of the council: the constitution *Pastor aeternus*. Initially, it was intended to embrace the whole concept of the Church, but because of political circumstances, only the question of the papacy was discussed. The text consists of four chapters: The conferment of the primacy to St Peter by Jesus himself; the continuation of this primacy in the Roman bishops; the nature of this primacy

> which is truly episcopal, is immediate; and with respect to this the pastors and the faithful of whatever rite and dignity, both as separate individuals and all together, are bound by the duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, not only in things which pertain to faith and morals, but also in those, which pertain to the discipline and government of the Church [which is] spread over the whole world.[12]

Whilst these parts were not so controversial, chapter four on papal infallibility was intensively discussed, not only within the Council but also inside and outside the Church. The critical minority had some success. They could avoid the declaration of an unlimited infallibility by acclamation. The final text[13] contains a large number of qualifications for infallible declarations and one might seriously ask whether these conditions can ever be fulfilled. Furthermore, infallibility is limited to questions of faith and moral; it is not applicable to the moral status of the Pope or to the administration of the Church. It is not a personal privilege of the Pope, but a promise to the Church as a whole that it will not abandon the message of its Lord.

Döllinger expected that infallible declarations would occur very often. In practice, however, it was only in 1950 that Pope Pius XII made use of

[11] Denzinger, no 3012.
[12] *Pastor aeternus*, Denzinger, no. 3060.
[13] *Pastor aeternus*, Denzinger, no. 3074.

the dogma in the dogmatization of Mary's assumption into heaven.[14] Today, nobody expects that such declarations ex cathedra will occur again. Was the dogma of papal infallibility intended as a protection of the apostolic faith, or only as an enhancement of authority? It is, after all, difficult to imagine a more absolute authority than an infallible one. The dogma was the climax of anti-modern tendencies within the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century.

The Change of Paradigm in Vatican II

In the light of the dogmas of Vatican I, the approach of Vatican II must be regarded as a change of paradigm. Pope John XXIII characterized it as *aggiornamento*, that is, to express the Christian faith in the context of today's way of thinking. In particular, *Gaudium et Spes* followed this concept.[15] Today, this constitution is sometimes criticized for being too closely related to the situation of the years of the council. Since this time our world has changed dramatically. I personally regard this relation to the challenges of the time as a special contribution of the Council. The church dared to proclaim its essence in relation to the world and this world is in permanent change. It was not the idealistic world of the philosophers that the fathers had in focus, but the real existing world with its "joy and hope, grief and anguish."[16] It became a matter of controversy as to what sort of character this document meant to express. German theologians regarded it as a declaration within a limited historical setting. Nevertheless, the bishops declared it as a "pastoral constitution" and thus gave it the highest value. They declared that the Church is "pastoral" and in its very essence it is related to the world, to history, and to the signs of the time.[17]

It is not surprising that this approach was controversial. Many of the bishops received their formation within an anti-modernistic theology and they saw the church first of all as a *societas perfecta*, perfect in itself and independent from the world, the society and the changes of history. Pope

[14] Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, Denzinger, nos, 3900–3903.

[15] See Hans-Joachim Sander's contribution in Peter Hünermann and Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanum* Vol. 4, (Freiburg: Herder 2005), especially the contribution of Marie-Dominique Chenu, 689.

[16] *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 1.

[17] An example of this theological approach was the title of Gerard Mannion's role as Senior Research Fellow of the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs and co-director of its Church and World Program.

Paul VI in particular sought to integrate this conservative minority too.[18] Councils decide not by the majority but they seek unanimity. To make unanimity possible the documents of Vatican II sometimes include a juxtaposition of controversial concepts. Thus, the central decisions of Vatican I were to reappear in the documents of Vatican II. Therefore, everybody was able to find his own conviction and he trusted that it would prevail in the following process of reception. In practice, many members of the hierarchy acted afterward as if Vatican II had never happened and they drew on those phrases the council had taken from Vatican I.

It is obvious that the Church underwent many changes after Vatican II, not only in its liturgy. Laypeople became actors in the Church; bishops and priests were regarded as ministers for the sake of the people. Following the Council, the popes have been very different from the Pius-Popes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nevertheless, the Code of Canon Law of 1983 adopted the dogma of papal primacy unmodified.[19] While canon law emphasizes that the Pope rules the Church together with the bishops, he is free whether he acts personally or together with the college of the bishops.[20] Immediately after Vatican II, we find papal decisions made in sharp contrast to a broad consensus of the bishops, for example, in the encyclicals on priestly celibacy (1967) and *Humanae vitae* on birth control (1968). The pope is free in the nomination of bishops; Pope John Paul II, in particular, in several cases imposed on dioceses bishops who did not find the trust of the people. A great deal of confidence was lost.

Chances for a Re-reading of Vatican I

There is in fact an urgent need for a re-reading and a re-evaluation of the dogmas of Vatican I in the light of Vatican II. The dogma of papal primacy is to be understood within the concept of political absolutism. Bishops, clergy, and especially laypeople are restricted to listen and to obey. That the Church is not a democracy in the political understanding of the term, however, does not mean that it might be an absolutist monarchy or even a dictatorial regime.

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[18] Especially in the *Nota explicativa praevia* to *Lumen Gentium* the Pope tried to integrate the conservative group around Cardinal Ottaviani.

[19] CIC (1983), can. 333 § 1.

[20] Can. 333 § 2.

The question remains, however, as to how to re-evaluate the dogma of papal primacy. Within Catholic theology, it has become obsolete to repeat the biblical and historical argumentation used in Vatican I. Nevertheless, there is a connecting point in the dogma of 1870 in its insistence on the unity of the Church. The ministry of St Peter and of the Roman bishops is to promote the unity and community of all the Christian faithful. This may present a starting point to a re-evaluation of the dogma. In times of strong centrifugal tendencies, it is important to maintain an office whose duty is especially the communion of all Christians. This approach to papacy today is predominant in Catholic theology and is also accepted by many protestant and by some orthodox theologians who are confronted with the fact that their respective models of a universal unity are not very convincing. The ministry of global communion is a starting point to a re-evaluation of primacy. Of course, this ministry has to be described in a different way from what was used by Vatican I and even by the Codex of 1983.

At first sight, the dogma of papal infallibility seems to be the biggest stumbling block and obstacle, especially to ecumenism. However, there are possibilities of interpretation, which allow for ecumenical progress. First, the primary subject of infallibility is the Church. Within very narrow presuppositions, the pope may represent the infallibility which the Lord has promised to the Church. The Church is thus not protected against heresy because it has an infallible pope, but the pope may speak in an infallible manner, insofar as he formulates the faith of the Church. The final term of the dogma ("*ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae*") is only the rejection of the demand of Gallicanism, that papal decrees demand a subsequent ratification by the bishops. Such a ratification was what was meant by the term "*consensus ecclesiae*". It was only the concept of Gallicanism that was rejected,[21] not the integration of papal decisions within the faith of the Church as the people of God.

One further observation: Vatican I defines the traditional term "ex cathedra" as "carrying out the duty of the pastor and teacher of all Christians". In the light of Vatican II, it is no longer possible to understand "all Christians" as all Catholics. The decree on ecumenism in particular declares the members of the different Churches and Church

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[21] The famous declaration of Bishop Vinzenz Gasser, speaker of the *Glaubensdeputation*, is documented in Roger Aubert, *Vaticanum I* (Mainz Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag 1965), 332–9.

communities, which are not in full communion with the pope, as Christians: "They have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers by the children of the Catholic Church".[22] Thus, we might ask: is it in contrast to Vatican I, re-read in the light of Vatican II, to argue, that the pope may be infallible when he represents the faith of all Christians?

In consequence, the papal ministry appears as an ecumenical office: unity is its duty. The pope has the ministry of global unity. This ministry is to be fulfilled by integration, not by separation. It would be an ecumenical opportunity to have a person, with whom all Christians are in contact and in unanimous agreement and who has to be in unanimous agreement with all Christian Churches. I am optimistic that the future of the papacy is an ecumenical one. The harsh formulations of Vatican I do not prevent such an interpretation. A new approach to the papacy is possible and necessary, both for Catholics and not-Roman-Catholic Churches and faithful.

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[22] *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 3.

Ecclesial Reform and Human Cultures

Sandra Mazzolini

In the Western tradition, "few ideas have enjoyed a longer, more complex, and, in many instances, more disruptive history than reform. Expressed by a number of terms, of which the most direct and obvious is the Latin *reformatio*, it has traditionally been defined as *mutatio in melius.*"[1] Etymologically speaking, *reform* is not a creation *ex nihilo* (in fact, it presupposes a previous original form). It is not a generic change and development, "that come about in a gradual fashion without deliberate decision making to effect the final result,"[2] because it "entails a self-consciously undertaken effort within an institution to effect change. It is thus different from changes that come about because of decisions taken by others."[3] The

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[1] John O'Malley, "'The Hermeneutic of Reform.' A Historical Analysis," *Theological Studies* 73 (2012): 517–546, 518. Even if the idea of *mutatio in melius* can be expressed by other terms, nonetheless *reform* "remains the most basic and most frequently invoked in almost every sphere of human activity to improve the status quo" (517).

[2] Ibid., 517. See also John O'Malley, "Developments, Reforms, and Two Great Reformations: Towards a Historical Assessment of Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 44 (1983): 374–378.

[3] O'Malley, "The Hermeneutic of Reform:'" 517.

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concept of reform refers, firstly, to the relationship between the past and the present, opening up to the future; secondly, to the historical and cultural context[4]; and thirdly, to specific criteria which determine forms and results, as well as the reasons and purposes of reform.

Originally directed towards each individual Christian, the concept of reform "early began to be applied also to the church as an organized social body and was thus launched on its impressive ecclesiastical trajectory."[5] In the course of time, the theme of ecclesial reform has been crucial but, at the same time, it has been a very thorny one. Today, this theme of reform also recurs in the magisterium of Pope Francis, who refers it to the ecclesiological model of the church which goes forth,[6] simultaneously stressing the very nature of ecclesial renewal, the missionary identity of the church, and the principle of pastoral conversion.[7] Within this framework, the relationship between ecclesial reform and human cultures is extremely relevant.

The Second Vatican Council set about discussing the issue of the relationship of the church to human cultures, recognizing, on the one hand, cultural plurality[8] and, on the other, that this multifaceted dialogical relationship enriches both the church and human cultures.[9] After the Council, there have been very many different discussions of this issue and its related questions, such as those of inculturation, evangelization of cultures, and

[4] Without a precise reference to the historical context, reform could be explained only by further abstractions, degenerating "into a platitude or even a mask for an ideology" (O'Malley, "'The Hermeneutic of Reform'," 521). See also John O'Malley, "Reform, Historical Consciousness, and Vatican II's Aggiornamento," *Theological Studies* 32 (1971): 589–601; O'Malley, "Developments, Reforms," 404.

[5] O'Malley, "'The Hermeneutic of Reform'," 518.

[6] See EG 20. 24. This ecclesiological figure summarizes some main perspective of Council Vatican II, as well as aspects of Latin-American and Argentinian theology. See, for example, Juan Carlos Scannone, *La teologia del popolo. Radici teologiche di papa Francesco* (Brescia: Queriniana 2019).

[7] See Sandra Mazzolini, "'An ecclesial renewal which cannot be deferred' (EG 27–33). Ecclesial Renewal and the Renewal of Ecclesial Structures," in *Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism. Evangelii Gaudium and the Papal Agenda*, ed. Gerard Mannion (New York: Cambridge University Press 2017), 77–83.

[8] This acknowledgment firstly entails the clarification of the concept of culture (see GS 53), and, secondly, the understanding of cultural diversity from the viewpoint of the divine plan of creation and salvation.

[9] See, for example, LG 13; GS 44–45. 58; AG 22.

so on.[10] Pope Francis has drawn attention to these themes,[11] for example in the framework of ecclesial reform in general, as well as of the reform of the ecclesial structures from the perspective of a healthy decentralization, which is necessary in order to accomplish the evangelizing mission of the church.[12] From this second viewpoint, the question of the local church as the primary subject of evangelization is very relevant, "since it is the concrete manifestation of the one Church in one specific place."[13]

Reviewing some of the principal data emerging from Council Vatican II,[14] Pope Francis has succinctly described the identity of the local church,

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[10] See Robert A. Hunt, *The Gospel among the Nations. A Documentary History on Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010); *Vangelo e culture. Per nuovi incontri*, ed. Sandra Mazzolini (UUP: Città del Vaticano, 2017); Pontificia Università Urbaniana – Facoltà di Missiologia, *Enchiridion sull'inculturazione della fede*, eds. Carmelo Dotolo, Sandra Mazzolini, and Gaetano Sabetta (Città del Vaticano: LEV-UUP, 2019).

[11] In EG 122–126, for example, Pope Francis has dealt with popular piety, which is a fruit of the inculturated gospel. He has also underlined the evangelizing power of popular piety. In the Aparecida Document, the bishops refer to it as "popular spirituality" or "the people's mysticism" (see DA 262). See Scannone, *La teologia del popolo*, 51–130, 153–163, 175–189. See also Maria Clara Lucchetti Bingemer, "Mística nel sur de América: Entre la profecía, lo cotidiano y la práctica," in *Nuevos signos de los tiempos. Diálogo teológico íberico-latino-americano* (Madrid: San Pablo, 2018), 371–388.

[12] See EG 16. In EG 32, Pope Francis has affirmed that "[e]xcessive centralization, rather than providing helpful, complicates the Church's life and her mission outreach." From the perspective of EG, decentralization refers not only to ecclesial institutions, but also to the evangelizing mission of the Church. Barreda affirms that "se trata del reconoscimiento de las Iglesias locales come sujetos de la misíon de la Iglesia, es decir, come sujetos que desarollan la naturaleza misma de la Iglesia, que el Vaticano II definió 'misionera'," in Jesús Ángel Barreda, *Evangelii Gaudium. Proyecto misionero del papa Francisco para la Iglesia de hoy* (México: Ompe, 2014), 76. Other concepts, such as collegiality, peripheries, are correlated to the idea of decentralization: see ibid., 76–82.

[13] EG 30.

[14] Even though the ecclesiological teachings of Vatican II refer to the universal church, there are nonetheless some elements concerning the local church that can be found in the conciliar documents that were promulgated. In fact, the Council has pointed out such things as the relationship of the local church with the universal church (see LG 23), the essential constitutive elements of the local church (see CD 11), the intrinsic relationship of the local church with a concrete space, which is not only territorial, but also anthropological and cultural. AG 22 has remarked the responsibility of each and every church in order to adapt its life and mission with reference to its own specific context. See Sandra Mazzolini, "Chiese particolari: profili ecclesiologici," in Pontificio Istituto Orientale and Pontificia Università Urbaniana, *Circoscrizioni ecclesiastiche erette nella forma dell'Ordinariato. Atti delle giornata di studio, Roma, 4 dicembre 2018*, ed. G. Ruyssen (Roma: Faculty Publications-Valore Italiano, 2020), 19–55.

which is a portion of the Catholic Church under the leadership of its bishop, as follows: "It is the Church incarnate in a certain place, equipped with all means of salvation bestowed by Christ, but with local features."[15] In it "the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative." According to this description, the identity of each and every church also refers to a specific cultural context, which contributes to the shape of the ecclesial institutions and structures, as well as theological approaches and pastoral and missionary activity. In other words, each and every local church is essentially an inculturated church, which is committed both to proclaiming the evangelical good news, and to organizing its life, including its institutional life, by referring both of them to specific anthropological and cultural contexts.

From this point of view, the idea of the church which goes forth is complex. In fact, it is what might be called people of many faces, because the people of God is incarnate in peoples, each of which has its own culture. It follows that "[i]n the diversity of peoples who experience the gift of God, each in accordance with its own culture, the Church expresses her genuine catholicity and shows forth the 'beauty of her varied faces'."[16] This cultural diversity, if properly understood,

> […] is not a threat to Church unity. The Holy Spirit […] builds up the communion and harmony of the people of God. The same Spirit is that harmony, just as he is the bond of love between the Father and the Son. It is he who brings forth a rich variety of gifts, while at the same time creating a unity which is never uniformity but a multifaceted and inviting harmony.[17]

From the point of view of the local church, which is the church incarnate in a certain place, there are many questions, both theoretical and practical, which also concern ecclesial reform. Some of them need to be developed further.[18] To understand this remark better, it is sufficient to

[15] EG 30.

[16] EG 116.

[17] EG 117.

[18] Some of these questions concern the very identity of the local church, the relationships between the universal and local church, the ecclesiological relevance of human cultures with reference to the identity of the local church, and so on. In addition, some of these issues also have ecumenical implications and are on the table of many Christian traditions. They need to be further clarified, also in the perspective of the ecclesial unity. See, for example, WCC, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (2013), ns. 31–32.

introduce here three implications for ecclesiology, which depend on the relevance attributed to the local church and are connected with Pope Francis's ecclesial vision. In addition, these implications introduce the key elements of the reform that needs to be put into practice by the Roman Catholic Church today.[19]

The first implication concerns the understanding of ecclesial catholicity in wider terms, which build on the conciliar teaching of LG 13. Here, "the council provides a brief theology of catholicity, of which the principal headings are: (1) the trinitarian source of catholicity, (2) catholicity as universality of races, nations and cultures, (3) catholicity as unity is rich diversity, and (4) catholicity as relationship with all of humanity."[20] Briefly, catholicity implies the recognition and integration of differences, which are also cultural, within a communal framework. If it is true—and it is—it means that a single uniform model of the church should no longer be reproduced or imposed everywhere. Without denying or weakening the constitutive elements of the local church, it should pay more attention to other elements, which derive from the context in which each and every local church is rooted. According to AG 22, from the cultures of their people, local churches "borrow all those things which can contribute to the glory of their Creator, the revelation of the Savior's grace, or the proper arrangement of Christian life."[21] From this viewpoint, ecclesial reform implies developing processes of discernment, because, on the one hand, not all cultural elements are consistent with the evangelical values, and, on the other, it is necessary to evaluate if and how positive cultural elements can be useful to ecclesial inculturation.

The second implication entails the relationships between the churches within the frame of the *communio Ecclesiarum*. Council Vatican II has also

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[19] See Mannion (ed.), *Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism*. See also *La riforma e le riforme nella Chiesa*, eds. Antonio Spadaro and Carlos María Galli (Queriniana: Brescia, 2016).

[20] Francis A. Sullivan, *The Church We Believe In. One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988), 87. "The following three articles spell out the ways that various categories of people are related to the church; art. 14 speaks of Catholics, 15 of other Christians, 16 of those who are not Christian. The last article, n. 17, treats the church's mandate to actualize its gift of catholicity by evangelization" (87–88; see also 88–108).

[21] "Since the Church has a visible structure as a sign of her unity in Christ, she can and ought to be enriched by the development of human social life, not that there is any lack in the constitution given her by Christ, but that she can understand it more penetratingly, express it better, and adjust it more successfully to our time" (GS 44).

introduced this issue,[22] paying more attention to the *communio Episcoporum*. Although without solving all the related questions, the Council has dealt, on the one hand, with the relationships between the college of bishops and its head, namely the bishop of Rome, and, on the other, with the mutual relations of individual bishops with particular churches and with the universal church.[23] It has also introduced the issue of the episcopal conferences,[24] which has been debated at various times since the Council.[25] Nevertheless, the question of the status of episcopal conferences remains unresolved.[26] Pope Francis has also mentioned this issue in the framework of the conversion of the central structures of the universal church, but has also recognized that the conciliar desire of improving episcopal conferences still has "not been fully realized, since a juridical status of episcopal conferences which would see them as subjects of specific attributions, including genuine doctrinal authority, has not yet been sufficiently elaborated."[27] The elaboration of the status of episcopal conferences, in order to promote an effective "sound decentralization", implies the recognition of the particularity of each and every local church in the framework of the *communio Ecclesiarum*. It is a significant part of today's ecclesial reform, which, due to the complexity of our time, also entails the search for the creation and/or implementation of other ecclesial structures that favor the *communio Ecclesiarum* at various levels and paying attention to the different contexts.

The third implication concerns the understanding of ecclesial synodality, which needs to be put into practice today in areas and spaces which are also characterized in different ways. In the Roman Catholic tradition, synodality is still understood mainly with reference to the synod of

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[22] See Hervé Legrand, "*Communio Ecclesiae, Communio Ecclesiarum, Collegium Episcoporum*," in *La riforma e le riforme*, 159–188.

[23] See LG 22–23.

[24] See LG 23; CD 37–38.

[25] See Umberto Casale, "Conferenza Episcopale," in *Dizionario di Ecclesiologia*, eds. Gianfranco Calabrese, Philup Goyret, and Orazio Francesco Piazza (Roma: Città Nuova, 2010), 345–54.

[26] Many authors have tackled this topic, which they have explained in different ways. Some of them have developed it in the frame of a dynamic understanding of episcopal collegiality, referring it to the *communio Ecclesiarum* and in the frame of the interaction between the effective collegiality and the affective collegiality. Other scholars have understood episcopal conferences as a juridical structure, whose authority derives from positive rules.

[27] EG 32.

bishops, although other synodal forms already exist.[28] Synodality implies communication between the churches, the active participation of various ecclesial subjects, recognizing their common dignity and their charisms and ministries, the implementation of discernment processes in view of the joint resolution of common problems, as well as of the development of new practices, and so on. Specifying the role of the various ecclesial subjects in the synodal processes is a highly relevant issue, which entails harmonizing the theological and juridical lexicon, as well as tackling thorny issues that still remain open. All of this is still insufficient for implementing synodal processes, which are an integral part of today's ecclesial reform, without the addition of a correlated and contextual formation of the ecclesial subjects, who are called upon to take part, directly or indirectly so to speak, in the synodal processes. This formation cannot refer solely to the baptized faithful, but also to ordained ministers, because each of them needs to be aware of their own role in the abovementioned processes, which imply "a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit, the 'Spirit of truth' (Jn 14:17), in order to know what he 'says to the Churches' (Rev. 2:7)."[29]

The encounter between the Church and human cultures can properly favor ecclesial reform both in general and also with reference to the ecclesial structures. The path of ecclesial reform is not easy, and yet it is open and requires the ecclesial subjects to commit themselves to it, each of them according to their own vocation, charisms, and ministries.

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[28] See Dario Vitali, "La circolarità tra *sensus fidei* e magistero come criterio per l'esercizio della sinodalità della Chiesa;" Alphonse Borras, "Sinodalità ecclesiale, processi partecipativi e modalità decisionali. Il punto di vista di un canonista;" Gilles Routhier, "Il rinnovamento della vita sinodale nelle chiese locali," in *La riforma e le riforme*, 189–206; 207–232; 233–247.

[29] *Cerimony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, Address of his holiness pope Francis* (17 October 2015).

CHAPTER 35

Ecclesiology in Extremis

Dale T. Irvin

Johannes Christiaan "Hans" Hoekendijk was a mid-twentieth century Dutch Reformed leader of the ecumenical movement who was passionate about the need for changes in our ecclesiological thinking.[1] Hoekendijk identified his primary area of work as being in mission studies. Mission for him meant change, which came about through the church's encounter with the world beyond itself. The church had become too settled in its own time and place. But the church as he understood it from the perspective of the New Testament and the message of Jesus had no fixed place as either the beginning or end of what God is doing in the world: "Consequently it cannot be firmly established but will always remain the *paroikia* [sojourner], a temporary settlement which can never become a

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[1] For a fuller introduction to Hoekendijk and his background, see D. T. Irvin, "For the Sake of the World: Stephen B. Bevans and Johannes C. Hoekendijk in Dialogue," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 44, no. 1 (January 2020): 20–32, first published online April 9, 2019, at https://doi.org/10.1177/2396939319839291

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permanent home".[2] This was for him the heart of being apostolic: being sent into the world both to transform and to be transformed.[3] Hoekendijk is most often remembered along these lines for his participation in the project carried out by the Department on Studies in Evangelism of the World Council of Churches that culminated in the 1967 publication of *The Church for Others and the Church for the World*, and in a collection of his own essays titled *The Church Inside Out* that was first published the previous year in 1966.[4]

Toward the end of the latter volume, Hoekendijk noted that various churches allow intercommunion in what are considered abnormal situations. The traditional language for such practices was for situations considered to be "in extreme" (in extremis). Such abnormal situations, Hoekendijk argued, include a "missionary situation," an "emergency situation," and situations where "we have passed the point of no return in our lives and have arrived on the threshold of death" (the traditional understanding of in extremis in Roman Catholic theology).[5] In such situations otherwise immutable ecclesiastical rules such as those that govern who can

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[2] J. C. Hoekendijk, "The Church in Missionary Thinking," *International Review of Missions* 41, no. 3 (1952): 334.

[3] See a fuller discussion of Hoekendijk's concept of apostolicity and mission in John G. Flett, *Apostolicity: The Ecumenical Question in World Christian Perspective* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 187–210.

[4] *The Church for Others and the Church for the World: A Quest for Structures for Missionary Congregations: Final Report of the Western European Working Group and North America Working Group of the Depeartment on Studies in Evangelism* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1967); and Johannes C. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966).

[5] Among the more recent official documents in Roman Catholic theology guiding pastoral practices regarding in extremis are the instructions "On Admitting Other Christians to Eucharistic Communion" (*In Quibus Rerum Circumstantiis*) published by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity on June 1, 1972 (Austin Flannery, O.P., ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1975], 554–559; the 1983 Code of Canon Law, paragraph 844, (online at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_INDEX.HTM, (accessed December 1, 2019); the "Ecumenical Directory" of 1993 (online at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_25031993_principles-and-norms-on-ecumenism_en.html); and the "Guidelines for the Reception of Communion" issued by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1996 (online at http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/guidelines-for-the-reception-of-communion.cfm (accessed December 1, 2019)). See also Jeffrey T. Vanderwilt, *Communion with Non-Catholic Christians: Risks, Challenges, and Opportunities* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), esp. 39–48.

administer or receive communion are capable of being suspended, modi-
fied, or outright changed, noted Hoekendijk. He pressed his analysis to
argue that these three situations are not abnormal at all for Christian faith.
They have been deemed "abnormal" by churches, but in fact they are the
norm of the gospel.

> When we look a bit more closely, we discover that in all three cases a situa-
> tion that ought to be normal for the Christian church is abnormalized in our
> thinking; the normal and the daily are mentally put in the corner of the
> extraordinary.[6]

It was not historically uncommon for rules forbidding intercommunion
to be relaxed in missionary situations over the past century, Hoekendijk
noted. The logic of unity being "manifested for the sake of the salvation
of the nations" reasserted itself in missions in a forceful way, causing the
divisions among "well-established and 'historic' (whatever that may mean)
churches" to disappear on their own. But this happened far from Europe,
where "the denominational apartheid at the Lord's Table is defended
tooth and nail", he noted.[7] It was now time to bring this logic to bear
upon the entire church in a forceful way.

> Where the gospel comes, missionary situations originate, everywhere and
> always. It is impossible to designate *a part* as "missionary" somewhere in
> space or somewhere in time, which apparently can be distinguished (accord-
> ing to any criteria available) from the other "nonmissionary" parts [...]. One
> who wants to speak authentically about a "missionary" situation has to
> know that he [or she] speaks about the whole world and the whole of his-
> tory, qualified as they both are by the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ
> [...]. That which cannot serve as "order of missions" has no right to exist as
> order of the church.[8]

Mission does not start outside the church, in other words, but starts at
the very heart of the church, in the preaching of the gospel. "In certain
special circumstances" (*In quibusdam peculiaribus rerum adiunctis*)
Catholics can join with other Christians from whom they are separated to

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[6] Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, 157.
[7] Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, 158.
[8] Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, 159.

pray, states Vatican II's *Decree on Ecumenism*.[9] Hoekendijk did not say so, but the same argument could be applied to the sacrament of communion, the Eucharist. Hoekendijk would have said that the presence of Christ in or under or around the bread and wine makes every celebration of the Eucharist certain and special, or peculiar. What is regarded as the exceptional ought instead to be regarded as the norm in light of the gospel.

From an eschatological perspective, Hoekendijk argued, the distinction between rules and exceptions is "quite dubious."[10] It was Christendom, he said, that had suppressed the extraordinary character of the gospel, just as it had separated mission from church. The world had changed, however. Ecumenical life is now diasporic, he said. The wilderness of postmodernity is both our new home and the way to the promised land.[11] We must leave behind the fleshpots of Egypt that were Christendom and modern denominationalism to embrace this new world into which God is calling us and sending as followers of Christ. In this contemporary post-Christendom context, the exceptional circumstances are now the norm, and everything can be seen as an emergency situation, allowing the rules against intercommunion to be broken.

Hoekendijk's basic insight is compelling for me: the message of Jesus Christ makes any circumstance extraordinary. Yet I still want to press him. Hoekendijk still seems at times to make an unqualified assertion that there is something about the nature of the particular time in which he was living, as opposed to other periods of history that made it exceptional. The tendency is to relegate the manner of living and theologizing in extremis to times of personal and collective endings. This is not to belittle or ignore the importance of such theological work in situations of extreme violence and oppression when death is all around. Nicola Slee's autoethnographic theological reflections on the conflict in Bosnia after a 2018 visit there is a

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[9] "Decree on Ecumenism / *Unitatis Redintegratio,*" para. 8, accessed online at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html (accessed December 1, 2019). "The Decree" tiptoes around whether to call these prayers in special circumstances "worship in common (*communicatio in sacris*)." That is because worship as such is not, according to "The Decree," to be a means for restoring unity. But common worship even across doctrinal divides can be "the sharing in the means of grace." In such a case, "the grace to be had from it sometimes commends this practice."

[10] Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, 169.

[11] Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, 189.

case in point.[12] But if Hoekendijk had stayed true to his own theological argument, he would have said that no age is more exceptional than any other simply because it is not the circumstances of the world in and of themselves, whatever we may judge them to be on a continuum from routine to unusual, that is the source of the dynamic that brings us to the edge or limit, in extremis. Rather it is the nature of the gospel itself that makes them extraordinary. This is a point that James Carroll has made more recently. He writes:

> The Gospel writers had an intuition, and it was shared by their readers, that only within the context of meaning provided by Jesus Christ could the extreme disruptive experiences they were undergoing make sense, or be survived. Jesus – as first made available in the drama of his usurping a rival, or mentor, named John the Baptist; and then in the other dramas that brought him to Jerusalem and the "place of the skull," Golgotha – was the key to the meaning of God's covenant in the new context of violent strife. Jesus, that is, was the figure in whom the *in extremis* fulfillment of God's promise could be seen. God was faithful to Jesus, up to and through death.[13]

The notion that there are exceptional circumstances that would allow doctrinal considerations regarding the sacraments or anything else of theological significance to be suspended or overruled implicitly asserts precisely what some of Hoekendijk's critics over the past several decades have charged him with perpetrating: the notion that the world apart from the gospel sets the agenda.[14] But the same charge can be made against the argument that doctrinal concerns about the nature of the Eucharist can be set aside in times of extreme or exceptional circumstances as they warrant such. If extreme or exceptional circumstances that occur within the world either call for or allow for suspension of theological rules regarding communion, then the world in its most extreme or exceptional form can and has indeed set the agenda. But this is not precisely what Hoekendijk said. *The Church for Others and the Church for the World*, in the North American section of the report on which Hoekendijk exercised a major influence, noted the popularity at the time in certain theological

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[12] N. Slee, "Theological Reflection in Extremis: Remembering Srebrenica," *Practical Theology*, 12, no. 1 (2019), 30–43.

[13] James Carroll, *Christ Actually: Reimaging Faith in the Modern Age* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 22.

[14] I identify and address some of these criticisms in: Irvin, "For the Sake of the World."

circles of the phrase, "Let the world write the agenda for the church." The report went on:

> This phrase is easily misunderstood. It has meaning only when the 'world' of which it speaks is seen in relation to the redemptive work of Christ. The world that writes the agenda is not, therefore, the "fallen" world, the world as the place of rebellion, but rather the world where Christ is carrying out his saving work.[15]

It is still the world in which we live and work, the world in which suffering is found, the world of broken bodies and broken spirits. Jesus' ministry did not take place in "another sphere than that of ordinary life."[16] The church does not live in "another sphere than that of ordinary life." This sphere of real life is one in which death is experienced. Jesus is not the only one who experienced death. The church has through the ages faced numerous instances of its own death as well. Gerard Mannion has noted that it is part of the theological and ecclesiological task to "confront the challenges of the age in an open and positive fashion." The task in no small part is called for "now that old concepts of authority have died."[17] But death is never the last word. Change is the result, in the form of resurrection. As Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy wrote in 1946, "The story of Christianity, both in the lives of individual Christians and in the life of humanity, is a perpetual reenactment of the death and resurrection of its Founder."[18]

It is the dynamic of the gospel, which is the dynamic of change brought about by resurrection in the Spirit, whether it is encountered in the church or in the world, that makes for extraordinary circumstances. Breaks in the world do not take place only along the edges or at the margins, in the extremes of experience. As Hoekendijk argued regarding ecclesiology, breaks in the rules do not just happen on the mission field, far from the centers of Christendom. If Hoekendijk is right, we do not have to wait until extraordinary or extreme circumstances arise to have permission to break the sacramental rules and bring about changes in ecclesiology. The

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[15] WCC, *The Church for Others,* 70.

[16] WCC, *The Church for Others,* 71.

[17] Gerard Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007), 27.

[18] Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *The Christian Future: Or the Modern Mind Outrun* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), 90.

good news of Jesus Christ ought to compel us on its own to break the rules, change the structures, reach across the divides, and join together in common ministry and mission in the world. Let me say this in a slightly different way: it is the gospel that is exceptional, brought about by the dynamic of the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead. Every moment in which it is proclaimed and lived out, be it in the church or the world, is an exceptional moment calling anew for a theology in extremis.

Ecclesiology

Ecclesial Extroversion: On the Reform in the Current Pontificate

Sandra Arenas

Slowly and gradually the Roman Catholic Church is taking responsibility for what is appropriately called an institutional failure,[1] a failure that urges it to move from its own axis outward, in a process of significant extroversion; a failure that has pushed to the edge the trust and credibility of its internal structures, especially of its ministries and, thus, touches not only the legal, but also the sacramental, liturgical, and more genuinely spiritual. Taking responsibility for it places the church in a broad plan of necessary reforms.

To undertake this plan, it is essential to look at the reasons that make reform necessary. Our emphasis will be on the progressive loss of trust and credibility, which, although is due to several causes—analyzable from multiple angles—all seem to converge. For the purpose of this work, the angle of analysis will be the vital context of its author, namely a Roman Catholic and Chilean lay theologian. This peculiar place will provide local

[1] C. Schickendantz, "Fracaso institucional de un modelo teológico-cultural de Iglesia Factores sistémicos en la crisis de los abusos," *Teología y Vida* 60, no. 1 (2019): 9–39.

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indicators, with key theological reflections in the context of ecclesial reform. The epistemological assumption is that local churches inform the global church in institutional design as well as in its charismatic vitality.

Initially, data will be provided (1) on the degree of engagement and institutional trust of the Latin American and Chilean Catholic parishioners in recent years; (2) then we will succinctly examine Pope Francis' responses relating to the reasonableness of the loss of credibility in the church, within the margins of his ecclesial reform plan and finally (3), I will make a theological evaluation.

The Data

The Roman Catholic Church has been progressively losing credibility in Chile. This has been reflected in various measurements of public opinion for several years now. According to the National Bicentennial Survey of the Pontifical Catholic University (UC)/GfK Adimark (2016), social trust in the church dropped from 44% in 2006 to 24% in 2016.[2] A recent study confirms this perception: CADEM, in mid-August 2018, indicated that 80% of its respondents acknowledged having little/no trust in the institution; 70% of them declared themselves Catholics.[3] Thus, the aforementioned deterioration does not correspond only to persons outside the institution, but also *to a significant group within it*. What is this crisis? The CADEM survey assesses certain attributes of the church, the results questioned the church's solidarity (53%), adaptation to new times (66%), knowledge and concern for human needs (58%), fieldwork (60%), closeness (67%), humility (73%), and honesty and transparency (83%).[4]

This last survey, in August 2018, showed that, among the elite groups, the bishops have lost the most trust between 1988 and 2018, down from 58% to 18%. That value was measured with respect to presbyters only in

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[2] Use the following link to access the surveys conducted by the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and Adimark, https://encuestabicentenario.uc.cl/resultados/. To consult the result of the measurements of religious behavior in Chile in 2015–2016 see file:///C:/Users/Admin/Desktop/Encuesta-bicentenario-2016-Religio%CC%81n.pdf [accessed January 15, 2020].

[3] To view the CADEM website, see https://www.cadem.cl/sobre-cadem/. To access the complete CADEM August 2018, Study N° 238 survey, see https://www.cadem.cl/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Track-PP-Jul-Sem1-N238-VF.pdf [accessed January 15, 2020].

[4] Ibidem.

March 2019, standing at 21%.[5] The same survey argues that interpersonal trust has historically been low in Chile and that this reflects social inequality.

Trust indicators have not risen, instead only further declined. According to the study of the UC and GfK Adimark, respondent's trust in the church fell from 18% to 9%, since 2017 and among Catholics it dropped from 27% to 15%.[6] It is the worst record of trust that the Chilean Church has had in these surveys, which are more than 12-years-old. Comparing Chile to wider Latin America, one notes that the decline in trust toward the church has also occurred in other countries.[7]

Francis and the Lack of Credibility in the Church

From an intentional reading of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (EG), one observes how the Roman pontiff himself considers that, under certain respects, the church can, and should even, be subject to a lack of credibility. EG is a programmatic document that conveys a dream, namely, the pastoral and missionary conversion of the church through *tenderness and mercy*. Laity, ministers, theologians, the episcopal college, religious, and the bishop of Rome himself are called to convert themselves to these attitudes in the transmission of faith. Prevalent throughout the document is the call to renew and rethink the structures of the church that tend toward *self-preservation*, so that "the freshness of the Gospel" *flows*. We note that the document establishes a correlation between the "noncirculation of the freshness of the Gospel," the tendency toward "self-preservation," and the "loss of credibility" in the church, an issue that particularly interests us in this work. The methodological question would be the following: When, in the opinion of Francis, would the freshness of the Gospel not circulate in the church? Examining the document from this

[5] This is the latest measurement of Chilean views regarding religious and religious institutions in March 2019, see https://encuestabicentenario.uc.cl/resultados/ [accessed January 15, 2020].

[6] To access the complete survey, see https://encuestabicentenario.uc.cl/resultados/ [accessed January 15, 2020].

[7] Not only has trust declined, but religious identities as a whole are experiencing transformation processes in LA. Catholics decrease, evangelicals stabilize, and agnostics, atheists and other religions grow. The cultural and political consequences of this progressive transition have been analyzed from various disciplines for a little over a decade. See, for example, C. Parker, "Pluralismo religioso, educación y ciudadanía," *Sociedade e Estado* 23, no. 2 (2008): 281–353.

question connects, without being forced, with the tone of the current questions regarding structural ecclesial reforms: Francis in the document deems certain motives reasonable for leading to the loss of credibility in the church. Subsequently, the document argues that it is/would be reasonable to believe in the church when, it allows the freshness of the Gospel to circulate/flow in matters of doctrine, morality, or worship and is not set in tendencies toward the self-preservation of its structures.

Reviewing some additional points, the Exhortation maintains that the "freshness" of the Gospel does not spring up and, therefore, the church loses credibility: when it becomes a tollhouse and not a house where there is room for everyone (Cf. 47); when the confessional becomes a torture chamber (Cf. 44); when the parish is transformed into a useless structure out of touch with the people […] a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few (Cf. 28); when theologians stay at their desks (Cf. 133); when the laity are not trained and those trained are not considered in areas of ecclesial decision-making (Cf. 102); when the bishop does not encourage or seek the maturation of participation mechanisms in his diocese and only hears those who "tell him what he would like to hear" (Cf. 31); when the papacy and the central structures of the universal church do not listen to the call for pastoral conversion (Cf. 32); when there is an obsession with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of doctrines (Cf. 35); when language is not updated in the transmission of the truths of the faith and a monolithic doctrine is defended without nuances (Cf. 40); when it is not recognized that there is a hierarchy of truths in doctrinal and even moral issues (Cf. 36); when Catholicism and preaching are reduced to a catalog of sins and errors (Cf. 39); when the church seals itself off, retreats into its own security, and opts rigidity and defensiveness (Cf. 45); when the church does not opt for the poor, when it is located at the center and not at the margins (Cf. 197); when it does not know to read cultural diversity or popular piety as a theological space (Cf. 126); when there is no community discernment to rethink ecclesial norms or precepts that are irrelevant today (Cf. 16, 33, 166).

When this occurs, contends Francis, the loss of credibility in the church becomes at least reasonable, the questions and criticisms of our people become relevant and an opportunity to make the church's borders more flexible.

Theological Evaluation

In the face of this general weakening of institutional trust, some questions arise: What supported this trust? When did its decline begin? What caused it?

It is at least hypothetically sustainable that trust collapsed because it *was poorly supported*. The authorities were blindly trusted, as a consequence of the culture in which we live. Institutions were not publicly challenged, however, now a bishop's resignation can be requested, the appointment of another can be paralyzed, or authorities can be publicly challenged to account for the fulfillment of the obligations related to their ministry. Clericalism is counted as the baseline, transversal, and radiating cause of the weakening of ecclesiastical trust and credibility; origin of the abuses committed in an ecclesiastical context. In the current crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in Chile, the abuse of conscience that follows the mentality of the clergy as a privileged class has promoted an insane asymmetrical relationship of power and this is seen throughout the Latin American continent.[8]

This analysis runs throughout Francis' position in EG and his interventions in local churches where abuse of power has been highly visible. The pope reiterated his criticism of the danger of authoritarianism and clericalism in the church during his visit to Chile. In Chile, he reminded the Bishops that "the laity are not our pawns, nor our employees […]. The lack of awareness of belonging to the faithful People of God as servants, and not as owners, can lead us to one of the temptations that does the most damage to the missionary dynamism that we are called to promote: clericalism."[9] In the Letter regarding the Pennsylvania Report (August 20, 2018), Francis writes:

> This is clearly seen in a peculiar way of understanding the Church's authority, one common in many communities where sexual abuse and the abuse of power and conscience have occurred. Such is the case with clericalism, an approach that […] tends to diminish and undervalue the baptismal grace that the Holy Spirit has placed in the heart of our people. […]. Clericalism […] leads to an excision in the ecclesial body that supports and helps to

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[8] Cf. A recent work by M. C. Bingemer, "Concerning Victims, Sexuality, and Power: A Reflection on Sexual Abuse from Latin America," *Theological Studies* 80, no. 4 (2019): 916–30.

[9] Cf. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/letters/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180408_lettera-vescovi-cile.html [accessed January 15, 2020].

perpetuate many of the evils that we are condemning today. To say "no" to abuse is to say an emphatic "no" to all forms of clericalism.[10]

Clericalism rejects the theological-doctrinal apparatus of fundamental equality. This includes assessing *internal dissent* as a condition creating the possibility for reform. The widespread practices of curbing changes, condemning and blaming dissidents, and even presenting as untouchable, issues that are actually debatable, generate withdrawal[11] and fear. In the list of *Evangelii gaudium* discussed in the previous section, one observes that Francis is in tune with essential conciliar premises in matters of the transmission of the faith, such as the development of doctrine and the hierarchy of truths.[12] The most authentic reform still is distinguishing the untouchable matters (a few) from the debatable (the majority); "Releasing" what is not binding can move one from the tendency for self-preservation toward ecclesial extroversion. When the people become a purely passive element; the participation of the laity in matters that they are responsible for weakens; the Synod of the Pan-Amazonian region is a good recent example. Ecclesial praxis has been the counterpoint to doctrinal fixation in debatable matters, such as the design and discipline of ministries or the appointment of bishops.[13]

The ecclesial abuse crisis triggers structural changes but also addresses the necessary theological foundation about the consistency of the local churches and their regional Episcopal Conferences, and other intermediate synodal instances, human rights within the church, the teachings on the doctrine of sexuality and sexual ethics and bioethics, the process for the appointment of bishops, the articulation of laity-teaching with the shared teaching role.

Engagement will not be achieved by the mere occupation of spaces by new types of individuals, or by the transfer of power to other ecclesial

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[10] The full text at https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2018-08/pope-francis-letter-people-of-god-sexual-abuse.html [accessed January 10th 2020].

[11] The withdrawal has been called ecclesial involution, the ecclesial winter (Rahner), a return to the great discipline (Libanio), the dark night (González Faus).

[12] Vatican II states that in many matters, even serious ones, the faithful should not expect answers from their pastors (GS 43).

[13] Cf. P. Suess, "Sínodo para a Amazônia e o mundo: vade mecum para uma agenda mínima," *Convergência* 53, no. 515 (October 2018): 34–45 and R. Guridi, "Sínodo pan-amazónico y COP25: la escucha y el diálogo como método," *La Revista Católica* 119, no. 1203 (July–September 2019): 308–316.

subjectivities, nor by assuming parliamentarism as a way of making ecclesial decisions through the construction of majorities. It is achieved, first and foremost, by recognizing and normalizing the subjectivity of each individual within the framework of the totality of the individuals that make up the people of God, since excluding any type of ecclesial subjectivity would harm the mission of the entire church. Hence, no one can be excluded from the call to participate; this causes the idea of synodality to lead into an ecclesiogenesis that affects the whole way of being and operating in the church. The recognition of the normative nature of subjectivities and ministries and their incorporation into decision-making processes under a binding condition would have avoided many of the current crises and restore credibility. The interaction among the different subjectivities, from the bottom up, sets in motion an ecclesiogenesis between the center and the periphery, which achieves the principle*:* what affects everyone must be dealt with and approved by all.

In the process of reform, Pope Francis is clear that *ecclesial extroversion* is indispensable, and it is an identifying trait of his pontificate. This is a trait that is at risk of fading away if local churches do not strengthen and seek the maturation of participation mechanisms or appropriate forms of transmitting the faith. Local churches must give relevant answers to real questions, without operating from a tendency toward institutional self-preservation and formalize other ministerial (unordered) forms that operate de facto.[14] This ecclesial extroversion makes real reform possible. This is a type of reform where, paraphrasing Francis, the "freshness" of the Gospel springs up and there the Church eventually recovers its relevance and credibility.

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[14] The church Prosecutors of Chiloé (Fiscales de Chiloé) or the Caciques of Andacollo are good examples of this where there is a high level of popular religiosity, both in the southern and northern of Chile, respectively. These are ecclesiastical leaders, who have a long-standing collective recognition and exercise functions that, if allowed by the current legal order of the Catholic church, fall within the ministerial themselves. Cf. Luis Nahuelanca, *Los apóstoles del archipiélago: el aporte evangelizador de los fiscales en la iglesia local de Chiloé—Chile* (Santiago: Ediciones Provincia Franciscana de la Santísima Trinidad, 1999) and Juan Uribe-Echevarría, *La Virgen de Andacollo y el Niño Dios de Sotaquí* (Valparaíso: Ediciones Universitarias de Valparaíso, 1974). Another example is the community leadership of consecrated women, especially in rural sectors.

Synodality as a Key Component of the Pontificate of Pope Francis: The Difficult Way from Theory to Practice

Peter De Mey

From his very first exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) Pope Francis was convinced that all levels of ecclesial life should be involved in the missionary endeavor (EG 27–33). It was especially needed to pay more attention to "the identity and mission of the laity in the Church" since they constitute "the vast majority of the people of God" (EG 102). In the speech he gave on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops, on November 18, 2015, Pope Francis used the term "synodality" to refer to the common responsibility of all the members of the people of God for the life of the Church.[1] On March 2, 2018, the International Theological Commission (ITC) published an extensive study on *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*.[2] As with all

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[1] This ceremony was one of the highlights of the second synod on the family. See http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html (accessed February 27, 2020).

[2] http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html (accessed February 27, 2020).

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documents from Rome its theoretical and practical values have to be critically investigated. First, however, it will be argued that synodality is deeply rooted in the ecclesiology of Vatican II.

The ITC and Pope Francis on the Conciliar Basis of Synodality

Right from its beginning, the ITC document situates synodality "in the teaching of Vatican II" (§ 6). In his recent *Letter to the Pilgrim People of God in Germany,* Pope Francis explains that synodality forms part of the "reception and further development" of Vatican II.[3] The ITC takes the conciliar basis of synodality to be "the ecclesiology of the People of God" for it "stresses the common dignity and mission of all the baptized, in exercising the variety and ordered richness of their charisms, their vocations and their ministries" (§ 6). In my view, the theology of synodality can better even be linked with the pattern, which the Council fathers used to describe the mission of the people of God as a whole and of the different categories within the people of God, that is, their taking part in the threefold office of Christ. Indeed, if one takes the mention of the messianic people in LG 9 as a brief hint to their sharing in the kingly office, then one can argue that LG 9–12 characterizes the Church as a whole as a priestly, prophetic and royal people. This is followed by descriptions of the specific way bishops (LG 25–27), priests (LG 28), and laity (LG 34–36) have their share in the *tria munera Christi*.

A key line in the attempt of the document to present the new theology of synodality as a faithful act of reception of Vatican II is found in § 9:

> In conformity with the teaching of *Lumen Gentium* Pope Francis remarks in particular that synodality "offers us the most appropriate framework for understanding the hierarchical ministry itself" and that, based on the

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[3] *Schreiben von Papst Franziskus an das pilgernde Volk Gottes in Deutschland*, § 9. This letter was published on the symbolic date of June 29, 2019 in response to the joint plan of the German bishops' conference and the Central Committee of German Catholics to engage in a synodal process. See http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/letters/2019/documents/papa-francesco_20190629_lettera-fedeligermania.html   (accessed   February 27, 2020).

doctrine of the *sensus fidei fidelium*, all members of the Church are agents of evangelization.[4]

According to the Pope, chapter 2 of *Lumen Gentium* understands the *sensus fidei* not only as a characteristic of the laity but of the *fidelium*, of laity and ordained, and chapter 3 never treats the hierarchy independently of the other members of God's people whom they serve. By briefly looking at the redaction history of LG 12 and LG 25 I hope to unpack this line further and prove that Pope Francis is a very precise reader of the documents of Vatican II.[5]

The draft prepared by the preconciliar commission had already introduced the notion of *sensus fidei* in its chapter on authority and obedience in the Church, in order to distinguish between *sensus fidei* and public opinion.[6] According to the revised version prepared by the Leuven theologian Philips, the sense of the faith was to be valued as something positive. At that point, a quote from Augustine was added to argue, as is explained in footnote, that "the *sensus fidei* is not only found among the laity, but in the whole community, including the hierarchy."[7] After the discussion of the revised *De Ecclesia* in the second session, the Theological Commission even added the idea that the Church always seeks to arrive at a "universal consensus."[8] Since only specialists of Vatican II study the footnotes and *relationes*, as of the same intersession, LG 12 explicitly

[4] The quote within the quote is one of 10 references in *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church* to the speech Pope Francis gave on the occasion of the Fiftieth anniversary of the Synod of Bishops. It was not for the first time that the International Theological Commission paid attention to the notion of *sensus fidelium*. See also the 2014 document on *Sensus fidei in the Life of the Church* and the critical review by Gerard Mannion, "*Sensus Fidelium* and the International Theological Commission: Has Anything Changed between 2012 and 2014?," in *Learning from All the Faithful: A Contemporary Theology of the Sensus Fidei*, ed. Bradford E. Hinze and Peter C. Phan (Eugene, OR, Pickwick Publications, 2016), 69–88.

[5] In this section I borrow some ideas from my larger study, "The Actors involved in the Exercise of the Prophetic Office in the Church: The Common Message of *Lumen Gentium* 12 and 25 and *Dei Verbum* 7–10," *Studia Canonica* 53 (2019): 127–164.

[6] AS I/4, 64 (§ 39).

[7] AS II/1, 265 n. 12: "Sensus fidei igitur non tantum apud laicos, sed in tota communitate invenitur, cointellecta hierarchia."

[8] The *Relatio* explains why the words "universalis consensus" have been chosen: "Agitur enim hic de toto Populo Dei, inclusa Hierarchia." Cf. AS III/1198.

mentioned that the *sensus fidelium* takes place "under the guidance of the sacred magisterium to which it is faithfully obedient" (LG 12).

With the help of a recent study by John Joy, I have been able to demonstrate an implicit reference to the role of the entire people of God in the lines of LG 25, which discuss the possibility that bishops "dispersed throughout the world" are also able to "infallibly proclaim the teaching of Christ." A footnote refers to the *Relatio* by Joseph Kleutgen on the revised schema for a constitution on the Church, which belongs to the materials of the First Vatican Council. The teaching of the bishops includes "whatever in matters of faith and morals is held or handed down as undoubted in every place under the bishops adhering to the Apostolic See."[9] This process taking place "under the bishops"—which is not the same as "by the bishops"—seems to allow for processes of consultation involving theologians and laity. Joy comments:

> Read in isolation, the final text of *Lumen Gentium* can easily give the impression that the exercise of the ordinary and universal magisterium is restricted to the direct activity of the bishops. Certainly the notes allow that it can also be exercised by the whole people of God under the supervision of the bishops. This intimate connection between the infallibility of the people of God and the ordinary and universal magisterium opens up space for an understanding of the latter that is not narrowly focused only on the explicit statements of the hierarchy.[10]

The teaching in *Lumen Gentium* that the hierarchy takes part in the *sensus fidelium* and the laity in the teaching office of the magisterium is confirmed in the beautiful lines about transmitting tradition as a collaborative task in DV 10:

> Tradition and scripture together form a single sacred deposit of the word of God, entrusted to the Church. Holding fast to this, the entire holy people,

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[9] AS II/1, pp. 249–250, n. 48, with a reference to MANSI 53, 313 AB: "Quaecumque igitur in rebus fidei et morum ubique locorum sub Episcopis Apostolicae Sedi adhaerentibus tamquam indubitata tenentur vel traduntur, necnon quae sive ab iisdem Episcopis, accedente Romani Pontificis confirmatione, sive ab ipso Romano Pontifice ex cathedra loquente ab omnibus tenenda et tradenda defiuntur, ea. pro infallibiliter veris habenda sunt." I borrow the English translation from John JOY, *On the Ordinary and Extraordinary Magisterium from Joseph Kleutgen to the Second Vatican Council* (Studia Oecumenica Friburgensia, 84) (Münster, Aschendorff Verlag, 2017), 148.

[10] Ibid., 149.

united with its pastors, perseveres always faithful to the apostles' teaching and shared life, to the breaking of bread and prayer. Thus, as they hold, practice and witness to the heritage of the faith, bishops and faithful display a unique harmony.[11]

The 'Old Style' Communion Ecclesiology of the ITC and Pope Francis

At first sight, it is hard to find weak spots in the theory of synodality developed by the ITC document. The involvement of the different actors in a synodal Church has been articulated with the help of three concepts that are widely used in Catholic ecclesiology and that are applicable to all levels of ecclesiastical life: "all," "some," and "one":

> On different levels and in different forms, as local Churches, regional groupings of local Churches and the universal Church, synodality involves the exercise of the *sensus fidei* of the *universitas fidelium* (all), the ministry of leadership of the college of Bishops, each one with his presbyterium (some), and the ministry of unity of the Bishop of Rome (one). The dynamic of synodality thus joins the communitarian aspect, which includes the whole People of God, the collegial dimension that is part of the exercise of episcopal ministry, and the primatial ministry of the Bishop of Rome.[12]

At all levels of ecclesial life this collaborative process involves a "dynamic circularity":

> The circularity of the *sensus fidei* with which all the faithful are endowed, the discernment carried out at the various levels on which synodality works and the authority of those who exercise the pastoral ministry of unity and governance shows the dynamic of synodality.[13]

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[11] The *Relatio* underlines the involvement of "the whole Church, which involves simple believers as well as the hierarchy." See AS III/3, 87. Cf. *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, § 64: "This correlation promotes that *singularis conspiratio* between the faithful and their Pastors, which is an icon of the eternal *conspiratio* that is lived within the Trinity."

[12] *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, § 64.

[13] Ibid., § 72. See also § 94: "Synodality as an essential dimension of the Church is expressed on the level of the universal Church in the dynamic circularity of the *consensus fidelium*, episcopal collegiality and the primacy of the bishop of Rome." Since the Argentinian theologian Carlos María Galli, one of the members of the commission, was also one of the conveners of the 2015 *Civiltà Cattolica* Seminar I deem it not impossible that the terminol-

My critique pertains to the fact that the reference to the ecclesiology of the people of God in the introduction is quickly abandoned in favor of an ecclesiology of communion, which even defends the notion of a "hierarchical communion" without reservations:

> The Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* sets out a vision of the nature and mission of the Church as communion, with the theological presuppositions of a suitable relaunch of synodality: the mystical and sacramental conception of the Church; her nature as People of God on pilgrimage through history towards the heavenly homeland, in which all her members are by virtue of baptism honored with the same dignity as children of God and appointed to the same mission; the doctrine of sacramentality of the episcopate and collegiality in hierarchical communion with the Bishop of Rome.[14]

One wonders whether Pope Francis is aware that the appraisal of the ecclesiology of communion as "the central and fundamental idea of the Council's documents" in the Final Report of the 1985 Synod of Bishops went hand in hand with a critique of the notion of people of God as easily leading to a "sociological conception of the Church."[15] In *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis seemed well aware that *Lumen Gentium* only had made a beginning with reflecting on episcopal collegiality and that the Church should not be afraid of granting episcopal conferences "genuine doctrinal authority," since "excessive centralization, rather than proving helpful, complicates the Church's life and her missionary outreach" (EG 32). Are not Pope Francis and the International Theological Commission in recent years not emphasizing the "*cum Petro et sub Petro*" rather

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ogy of circularity has been borrowed from Dario Vitali, "The Circularity between *Sensus fidei* and Magisterium as a Criterion for the Exercise of Synodality in the Church," in *For a Missionary Reform of the Church*, edited by Antonio Spadaro, SJ and Carlos María Galli (NewYork/Mahwah, NJ, Paulist Press, 2017), 196–172, 210: "To presume that God speaks to the Church always and only through the voice of her pastors is an assertion that could rely on a logic of defending the truths of faith, entrusted to the custody of the *ecclesia docens*, to which the *ecclesia discens* is bound to obey. But on this path, we have lost the fruitful circularity between the pastors and the people of God."

[14] *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, § 40.

[15] See https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/final-report-of-the-1985-extraordinary-synod-2561, partim (accessed February 28, 2020).

excessively?[16] The German Catholic theologian Christian Bauer formulates an important warning in this regard:

> If the ordained ministry would again like to gain authority with the remainder of the people of God, then a deliberate abstinence of the power of a monarchically conceived office will be necessary through freely accepting the checks and balances of democratically conceived synodal structures.[17]

The Pope and the ITC, however, rightly insist on the indispensability of a well-developed *sensus ecclesiae* as criterion for a healthy synodality.[18]

Recommendations and Difficulties for a Strong Synodal Practice at Local, Regional, and Universal Level

Both the ITC document and the 2015 address of the Pope discuss the different "organs of communion" at local, regional, and universal levels. If these organs would function better, this would make the Catholic Church change for the better. I will, however, also mention some difficulties as to their implementation from my context.

Under the previous pontificates bishops were often discouraged from organizing a diocesan synod. When reading the publicity Pope Francis makes for this "noble institution" one almost feels ashamed to belong to a diocese which has not yet taken the initiative to organize a diocesan

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[16] *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, § 60: "The communion of Churches with each other in the one universal Church illuminates the ecclesiological meaning of the collegial 'we' of the episcopate gathered in unity cum *Petro et sub Petro*." See also the following quotation from the discourse on the fiftieth anniversary of the synod: "The fact that the Synod always acts cum *Petro et sub Petro*—indeed, not only cum *Petro*, but also *sub Petro*—is not a limitation of freedom, but a guarantee of unity."

[17] C. Bauer, "Macht in der Kirche: Für einen postklerikalen, synodalen Aufbruch", in *Stimmen der Zeit* 144 (2019): 531–543, at 537: "Wenn die pastorale Amtsgewalt im übrigen Volk Gottes je wieder Autorität gewinnen will, dann bedarf es einer entschlossenen Selbstdepotenzierung des monarchisch verfassten Kirchenamtes durch freiwillige Einbindung in die Checks and Balances von demokratisch verfassten Synodalstrukturen."

[18] *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, § 108: "It is about attitudes summed up in the formula *sentire cum Ecclesia*." See also the long reflection on the *sensus Ecclesiae* in *Schreiben an das pilgernde Volk in Deutschland*, § 9.

synod.[19] An interesting alternative seems to be the organization of a provincial council. A recent example—the first one in France since the Second Vatican Council—has taken place in three neighboring dioceses in the North of France from 2013–2015. The positive account given by a colleague from Louvain-la-Neuve makes me think that it could perhaps be an option for the four dioceses of Flanders as well. They have received a dispensation from Rome to nominate more lay members than is allowed for by canon law and they deliberately chose for a majority of members who were mostly professionally engaged in these dioceses, which was beneficial for the quality of the discussions.[20] They also did not have to wait long to receive permission from Rome to promulgate the decisions of the council. By organizing this synod for three dioceses the participants better understood that the Church is bigger than their own diocese and thus got a better sense of the significance of the universal Church as well. The enthusiasm of bishops to organize a diocesan synod or provincial council in the future will depend a great deal on what happens in the future with the synodal process in Germany.[21]

With regard to the Synod of Bishops, the Apostolic Constitution *Episcopalis Communio* (2018) includes in its regulations the necessity of engaging in an intensive and obligatory process of consultation and allows for the Pope to adopt the synod's final document instead of writing a postsynodal exhortation.[22] The document of the International Theological Commission asks us not to minimize the importance of the process of consultation: "In the synodal Church the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyze, dialogue, discern, and offer advice on taking pastoral decisions, which

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[19] Nevertheless A. Borras, "La synodalité ecclésiale: Diversité de lieux et interactions mutuelles," *Recherches de science religieuse* 107 (2019): 275–299, at 298 observed: "On risquerait de la sorte de perpétuer un déficit de protagonisme des évêques diocésains ainsi que des Églises particulières et de leurs regroupements, en particulier les Conférences épiscopales."

[20] A. Join-Lambert, "Le concile provincial, une chance pour la synodalité de l'Église," in *Recherches de science religieuse* 107 (2019): 301–320, at 313: "Ce qui pourrait passer pour un détail est particulièrement significatif d'un déploiement de la synodalité au-delà du cadre canonique encore pensé en partie selon la tradition en fait cléricale. En effet, les membres de droit sont liés à des fonctions remplies pour la plupart par des prêtres. La clause restrictive du canon 443 entrave en quelque sorte la réalisation concrète du passage à un fondement sur le baptême et non plus sur l'ordination presbytérale."

[21] Cf. www.synodalerweg.de

[22] Cf. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_constitutions/documents/papa-francesco_costituzione-ap_20180915_episcopalis-communio.html

correspond as closely as possible to God's will."[23] The document also explains the difference "between the process of decision-making through a joint exercise of discernment, consultation, and co-operation and decision-taking, which is within the competence of the Bishop, the guarantor of apostolicity and catholicity. Working things out is a synodal task; decision is a ministerial responsibility."[24] In my country consultative pastoral bodies often have the impression, however, that the critical remarks they had been raised during the process of consultation of such synods have often been filtered out in the report that the episcopal conference had to send to Rome.

Conclusion

Pope Francis and his counselors have offered us an ecclesiological theory, which potentially may bear many fruits in the Catholic Church, at local, regional, and universal levels. Synodality is a new term, which is, however, firmly rooted in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. Pleading for a strong participation of the entire people of God in the three-fold office of Christ is difficult to combine, however, with a strong emphasis on the Church as a "hierarchical communion."

[23] *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, § 68.
[24] Ibid., § 69.

Changing the Church Through Synodality

Brian P. Flanagan

One of the main aspects of Pope Francis's "radical ecclesiology of openness, inclusivity, and dialogue"[1] that is beginning to take shape in the Catholic Church, is the revival of the Second Vatican Council's hopes for a synodal church. Most prominently in the frequency and the new atmosphere of the meetings of the synod of bishops, Pope has set the church on a course to re-embrace synodality as the foundational principle of collective discernment and decision-making. This chapter surveys a particular contribution to that renewed, radical ecclesiology, a document from the International Theological Commission (ITC) that outlines the theology and practice of synodality in a way that reflects the priorities of Francis's ecclesiology.[2] Francis has pushed the Catholic Church towards "the path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium,"[3]

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[1] Gerard Mannion, "Francis's Ecclesiological Revolution: A New Way of Being Church, a New Way of Being Pope." In Gerard Mannion, ed. *Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism*: Evangelii Gaudium *and the Papal Agenda* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017), 94.

[2] International Theological Commission, "Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church," March 2, 2018.

[3] Pope Francis, "Address," Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops, 17 October 2015.

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and while the ITC document is only one step forward in that path, an appropriation of the gift of synodality at all levels of the church will allow it to share the good news more authentically in the face of a democratic world, more ecumenically in relation to churches with longer histories of synodal structures, and more faithfully in expression of the vocation of all of the baptized. The further embrace of synodality, on the basis of this document, has the potential to lead to a wide renewal of synodal practices throughout the Catholic Church.

While the practices of synodality go back to the earliest days the church, the word itself is a more recent neologism.[4] In many ways, to be "synodal," that is, to involve Christians' call to "walk a path together" (from the Greek words "σύν", "with", and "ὁδός", "path"), is characteristic of the history of the pilgrim church. Since modern studies of synodality go back decades,[5] the ITC document harvests the fruits of that research as well as Pope Francis's recent priorities. It outlines the sources of synodality in scripture and tradition, a theology of synodality for today's church, its structures and institutions as they currently exist, and the need for a conversion to a spirituality and fuller practice of synodality for the life of the church since, as it repeats at least three times, synodality is the "*modus vivendi et operandi* of the Church."[6]

Like many other treatments of synodality, the ITC document roots its idea of synodality in both scriptural warrants and the continuing history of the church, particularly the shared forms of decision-making of the first millennium of Christianity. While drawing upon multiple biblical

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[4] ITC, "Synodality," § 6.

[5] Among many sources, see especially Giordano Frosini, *Una Chiesa di Tutti: Sinodalità, partecipazione, e corresponsabilità* (Bologna: Edizione Dehoniane Bologna, 2014); International Congress of Canon Law, *La synodalité*: *la participation au gouvernement dans l'Église*: *actes du VIIe Congrès international de droit canonique, Paris, Unesco, 21–28 septembre 1990*, 2 vol. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1992); Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, "Synodality and Primacy during the First Millennium: Toward a Common Understanding in Service to the Unity of the Church," *Origins* 46/21 (Oct. 20, 2016) 328–31; Alberto Melloni and Silvia Scatena, eds., *Synod and Synodality: Theology, History, Canon Law and Ecumenism in New Contact* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005); Gilles Routhier, "La synodalité dans l'Église locale," *Scripta theologica* 48 (2016): 687–706; Ormond Rush, "Inverting the Pyramid: The *Sensus Fidelium* in a Synodal Church," *Theological Studies* 78 (2017) 299–325; Antonio Spadaro and Carlos Galli, "La sinodalità nella vita e nella missione della Chiesa," *La Civiltà Cattolica* 169/II, no. 4039 (2018) 55–70.

[6] ITC, "Synodality," § 6, § 43, and § 70.

references, the so-called Council of Jerusalem described in Acts 15 and Galatians 2:1–10[7] forms a major source for the document's overall theology of synodality.[8] This is particularly true in its sense of synodality's authority, synodality's differentiated structure of roles (the ITC returns regularly to the formula of "all," "some," and "one," distinguishing forms of overall involvement, synodal participation, and primacy), and the origins of the history of synods and councils that they document in the undivided churches of the first millennium, medieval western Christian practice, and post-Reformation practices in both the Protestant ecclesial communities and the post-Tridentine Catholic Church.[9]

The heart of the ITC's treatment is its second chapter, entitled "Towards a Theology of Synodality," that roots its treatment of a synodal church in four distinctive ecclesiological elements that are the fruits of the Second Vatican Council: the image of the church as the People of God, the pilgrim and missionary nature of that People, an ecclesiology of communion that emphasizes the shared mission of the entire church in its local and universal forms, and the hierarchical communion and distinctions in role that structure and serve the church's communion. First, the ITC emphasizes the Trinitarian origins of the church, its Christological and pneumatological foundations, and its Eucharistic and liturgical enactment as the assembly of the faithful.[10] Looking back to the organizing structure of *Lumen Gentium*, the document teachings that the deep theological identity of the church as the People of God "stresses that the ecclesiastical hierarchy is at the service of the People of God in order that the Church may carry out her mission in conformity with God's plan of salvation, in the logic of the priority of the whole over its parts and of the end over the means."[11] Such an idea roots the differentiating structures of synodality on a foundational principle that "everyone in the Church is a subject. The faithful are σύνοδοι, companions on the journey. They are called to play an active role inasmuch as they share in the one priesthood of Christ, and are meant to receive the various charisms given by the Holy Spirit in view of the common good."[12]

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[7] See also Justin Taylor, "The "Council" of Jerusalem in Acts 15," in Melloni and Scatena, *Synod and Synodality*, 107–113.

[8] ITC, "Synodality," § 20–22.

[9] See ITC, "Synodality," § 24–41.

[10] ITC, "Synodality," § 43–48.

[11] ITC, "Synodality," § 54.

[12] ITC, "Synodality," § 55.

Second, this People of God is also a *pilgrim* people, which emphasizes synodality's relation to the church's "social, historical, and missionary character, which corresponds to the condition and vocation of each human person as *homo viator*,"[13] and draws directly upon the etymological roots of the concept. "The grace-filled event whereby [Jesus] made Himself a pilgrim by pitching His tent among us (John 1:14) goes on in the synodal path of the Church."[14] This conception of the church as a people in motion points to synodality's function in collective discernment particularly in response to historical development, to new challenges and threats, and to new knowledge and insights that would strengthen the church's mission.

Third, the document roots its theology of synodality in an ecclesiology of communion. Given the variety of "visions and versions" of communion ecclesiology that have arisen in the past 30 years,[15] and the predominance, particularly since the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops and the 1992 letter *Communionis notio* of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, of a version of communion ecclesiology focused upon the language of "hierarchical communion," this document's embrace of a wider understanding of communion ecclesiology is theologically and ecclesially significant.[16] In various places, the document underlines synodality as an exercise of communion between God and humanity and between Christians within their local churches, between local churches, and across the other provincial, regional, and national groupings of ecclesial life in relation to the universal church. The document states that "synodal life reveals a Church consisting of free and different subjects, united in communion,"[17] and particularly in balancing the local and universal church, rather than asserting the priority of the universal over the local, asserts that "In the Church as Catholic, variety is not mere co-existence but bonding in mutual correlation and dependence: an ecclesiological *perichoresis* in which trinitarian communion sees its ecclesial reflection."[18] Such a vision corresponds

[13] ITC, "Synodality," § 49.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Cf. Dennis Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Visions and Versions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000).

[16] By contrast, see Gerard Mannion, "From the 'Open Church' to Neo-Exclusivism?" in Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press), 43–74.

[17] ITC, "Synodality," § 55.

[18] ITC, "Synodality," § 60.

to Pope Francis's vision of a "polyhedral" church that maintains communion in diversity without the reduction of unity to uniformity, of the many-sided reality of the church to the homogeneity of a sphere.[19]

Fourth and finally, the document addresses the need for distinctions within synodal practice that reflect the hierarchical constitution of the church, and the differing roles that "all," "some," and "one" play in various forms of synodal practice. Even here, however, the document suggests the need for a renewed, more robust inclusion of a variety of voices in the church's synodal discernment. The document states that "the renewal of the Church's synodal life demands that we initiate processes for consulting the entire People of God,"[20] and that "in the synodal Church the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members, is called together to pray, listen, analyze, dialogue, discern, and offer advice on taking pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God's will."[21] Further, the text underlines the participation of lay people: "They are the immense majority of the People of God and there is much to be learnt from their participation in the various forms of the life and mission of ecclesial communities [...]. Consulting them is thus indispensable for initiating processes of discernment in the framework of synodal structures."[22]

Summing up this entire vision of the theology of the synodal church, the document teaches that "synodality denotes the particular *style* that qualifies the life and mission of the Church, expressing her nature as the People of God journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel."[23] It is an admirable, well-grounded understanding of the centrality of synodal life and practice in the church, and arguably provides a counterweight to some of the forms of clericalism dominant in Catholic ecclesiology particularly in the past few centuries. And, by rooting discussion of particular synodal structures and events in a broader theological and ecclesiological framework, it shows how some of the structures and practices of synodality, despite superficial resemblances, are rooted in

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[19] See Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, On the Proclamation of Gospel in Today's World, November 24, 2013, § 236. See also Victor Manuel Fernández, "Encounter," in Cindy Wooden and Joshua McElwee, eds., *A Pope Francis Lexicon* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2018), 61–64.

[20] ITC, "Synodality," § 65.
[21] ITC, "Synodality," § 68.
[22] ITC, "Synodality," § 73.
[23] ITC, "Synodality," § 70.

a different worldview, anthropology, and social theory than the structures of modern liberal democratic polities.

But it is precisely at the level of "implementing synodality," the title of the third chapter of the document, that this vision is at its most vulnerable, and where the most work needs to be done, in practice and scholarship, to better reflect the synodal foundations of ecclesial life, to truly make it the church's *modus vivendi et operandi*. The document's treatment of the current canonical structures by which synodality is exercised in the Catholic Church, including diocesan synods, diocesan and parochial councils, episcopal conferences, Eastern Catholic patriarchates, and universal exercises of synodality through the Synod of Bishops and ecumenical councils.[24] There are places for hope for further canonical and institutional development. As in *Evangelii Gaudium* § 33, the document's call for further reflection on "the ecclesiological nature of Episcopal Conferences"[25] seems to break with the more limited assessment of the authority of episcopal conferences in *Apostolos Suos*[26]; it, quite tentatively, suggests that parish pastoral councils ought to be made canonically obligatory, rather than only suggested.[27]

While the document calls for increased participation of the "all" in the deliberations of the "some" and the "one" in various contexts, however, it does not provide more definite guidance or new canonical structures by which to do so. This may be prudential: the churches and the universal church may need more experience in developing structures and practices by which to hear the voices of the People of God, as the uneven preparatory surveys and consultations before the 2018 Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops on Young People suggested. And perhaps the more recent consultative processes utilized for the 2019 Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region, and more local models being used in recent or upcoming synodal processes, such as in St. Paul-Minneapolis, San Diego, and Germany, may provide examples—and counter-examples—for how to exercise synodality at all of the levels of the church.

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[24] Significantly, the College of Cardinals receives only one paragraph! ITC, "Synodality," § 101.

[25] ITC, "Synodality," § 89.

[26] John Paul II, *Apostolos Suos*, "On the Theological and Juridical Nature of Episcopal Conferences," May 21, 1998. See also Mannion, "Francis's Ecclesiological Revolution," 106–108.

[27] ITC, "Synodality," § 84.

But if synodality is going to involve more than formal structures, especially structures that are canonically optional or only used infrequently, the church requires both spiritual renewal, the conversion to "an ecclesial mentality shaped by synodal thinking,"[28] *and* canonical renewal, the conversion of structures in such a way that they serve this vision of the church. Outlining this theological vision of the synodal church, rooted in the teaching and practice of Pope Francis, is an important and necessary first step. But as evidenced by the transition from some of the synodal vision of the Second Vatican Council to the implementation of that vision in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the renewal of synodality as the *modus operandi et vivendi* of the church is the task of a generation, not a document. It will require courageous action on the part of local pastors, collective patience with the initial successes and failures of particular strategies, sustained reflection by theologians and canonists, and continued conversion of habits, led by example from the top, of consultation, dialogue, and discernment. If the church is to change and to embrace this "radical ecclesiology of openness, inclusivity, and dialogue,"[29] we have work to do to make real Pope Francis's teaching that "to walk together is *the constitutive way* of the Church."[30] This document provides an excellent first step in that renewal of synodality, the church's most ancient form of collective discernment and decision-making.

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[28] ITC, "Synodality," § 104.

[29] Mannion, "Francis's Ecclesiological Revolution," 94.

[30] Pope Francis, "Address at the Opening of the 70th General Assembly of the Italian Episcopal Conference," May 22, 2017. Cited in ITC, "Synodality," § 120.

Local Synodality: An Unnoticed Change

Radu Bordeianu

A significant change occurred in the first three centuries of the Church: the unique eucharistic assembly led by the bishop in the diocese transitioned into the Liturgy presided over by the priest in the parish. And yet, modern Orthodox ecclesiology tends to attribute no ecclesiological significance to the parish and continues to speak about synodality exclusively in episcopal terms. As Schmemann contends, "the process which transformed the original 'episcopal' structure of the local church into what we know today as parish […] although it represents one of the most radical changes that ever took place in the Church, remained, strange as it may seem, virtually unnoticed by ecclesiologists and canonists."[1] Based on this change in the life of the Church, I propose a theological change, namely shifting away from universal episcopal synodality[2] and focusing on

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[1] Alexander Schmemann, "Towards a Theology of Councils," *St Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1962): 177.

[2] While the 2016 Synod of Crete should have been an impetus for universal synodality, it in fact moderated Orthodox claims that synodality is its ecumenical charism, or even that it exists at all at the universal level, four Patriarchates having withdrawn shortly before the Council. Crete also radically challenged the Orthodox vision of Christian unity. Orthodox representatives to ecumenical dialogues claim that the ideal model of unity involves gathering

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synodality in the parish, diocese, and autocephalous Orthodox Church with emphasis on lay involvement.

The term "synod" refers primarily to a gathering of bishops who exercise their ministry together. It comes from the Greek words *syn* (with) and *odos* (way), and so suggests "walking together along the same path." Its etymology implies both that the Church remains pilgrim as it advances towards the Kingdom of God and that one cannot travel along this path in isolation. In a larger sense, "synodality" and its synonym, "conciliarity" refer not only to the episcopate, but to all the baptized members of the Church, as they exercise their responsibilities together.

Synodality is rooted in the communal character of the earlier ministry of Jesus Christ, who called the twelve to symbolize the entirety of Israel, and not just a select group to the exclusion of Jesus' other followers. These roots bore fruit most notably at the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem described in Acts 15: "Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed [by the community in Antioch] to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders."[3] These delegates consulted along the way with other communities (Acts 15:3), and when they arrived in Jerusalem, "the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter."[4] After Peter, Paul, and Barnabas spoke, James took the role of mouthpiece for the Council. Moreover, "the apostles and the elders, with the whole church"[5] chose *omothumadon*—"with one accord" (NKJV) or "unanimously" (NRSV)[6]—representatives to disseminate the decision of the Council, which was inspired by the Holy Spirit ("it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us").[7] This Apostolic Council became the (perhaps idealized) template for future councils, with emphasis on churches designating representatives, a process of consultation, plurality of voices represented at the council, inspiration by the Holy Spirit, unanimity (or maybe consensus), a conciliar decision, and its dissemination. Clearly, the

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in the same synod and receiving Communion together. Unfortunately, this ideal of unity is often imposed as a condition for Orthodox-Catholic unity, when in fact its practical realization in world-wide Orthodox life is lacking.

[3] Acts 15:2.

[4] Acts 15:6.

[5] Acts 15:22.

[6] Acts 15:25. The distinction between unanimity and consensus will have to be discussed on a different occasion.

[7] Acts 15:28.

Apostolic Church was synodal—a shared responsibility that included the Apostles, the elders, and all the faithful.

By the second century local churches combined the conciliar model characteristic of the Jewish synagogue led by a council of elders with the Roman model in which the *pater familias* led the household. These church structures included the one bishop (mono-episcopate), surrounded by a council of elders or *presbyterium*, whose role was consultation and administration, assisted by deacons entrusted with social-charitable responsibilities, and all the faithful with various charisms. The church remained synodal even in times of persecution. For example, when Cyprian of Carthage was unable to consult with his church because of the persecutions, he assured his faithful of the exceptional character of his actions: "I made this a rule, from the beginning of my episcopate, not to decide anything without your [that is, presbyters'] counsel and without the approval of the people."[8] Thus synodality remained at the heart of the local church's life.

The same was true at a regional level. Local churches supported each other financially, exchanged letters, strengthened each other in times of martyrdom, prayed for one another, and appealed to one another regarding doctrinal and disciplinary issues. Regional synods increased in number, gathering the bishops of a certain region together, thus showing that episcopacy is a ministry that cannot be exercised in isolation. Bishops were held responsible to both their local communities and their brother bishops.

As local churches from larger regions (such as around Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch), and then throughout the entire Christian world faced similar challenges, synods expanded to include representatives of more metropolitan areas.[9] Based on the ideals of the Apostolic Council, Orthodoxy recognizes seven councils as ecumenical. But these ideals are not objective and undisputed criteria for the recognition of councils as ecumenical, since other councils (later not recognized by Orthodoxy) did claim to fulfill these criteria; such are the cases of Lyons (1274) and Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439), for example. And yet, the seven ecumenical councils have been received as authoritative instances of the Tradition due to the importance of their proclamations of faith, the consultation with the faithful and theologians, the large representation of various local churches, the consensus achieved during their works, and the reception of

[8] *Epistle* 5/14:4.
[9] See Nicaea I, Canon 6.

their decisions especially in liturgical life. Thus, throughout history, the Church remained synodal at local, regional, and universal levels.

THE PARISH AND THE DIOCESE

Numerous discussions about synodality are based on the study of history, a theology centered on the role of the bishop, and a canonical perspective. These discussions tend to backslide into considerations about structures of power, giving insufficient attention to the faithful and to parish clergy. Orthodox theology is still unable to speak about the parish as anything other than a sub-unit of the diocese or as a satellite of the episcopal Eucharist.[10] Such theology is remote from the concrete experience of the Church. However, it need not be so. A change is needed that takes into consideration the parish and the involvement of the laity.

Considering the continuous presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the history of the Church, we need to embrace the fact that, early on, the eucharistic assembly led by the bishop in the diocese transitioned to the Liturgy presided over by the priest in the parish. Schmemann recommends that Orthodox theology addresses this reality that emerged from the Church's need to remain eucharistic, rather than bemoan it:

> all attempts simply to return to the "episcopal" experience of the Church in its second or third century forms […] will remain the domain of academic wishful thinking as long as we ignore the reality of the parish and the position of the priest in it. We must admit that many of the characteristics of the early "episcopal" community have been assumed by the parish, just as the priest has been given many of the bishop's functions.[11]

Today, the most common experience of the Church is the parish community gathered together around the Eucharist, the active participation of all the faithful together with the priest. This image is intrinsically synodal when considering the multitude of ministries involved, for example, chanters, choir, parish council, or priesthood. Moreover, in the Orthodox

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[10] Zizioulas insists that the emergence of the parish was an *anomaly* or, in his words, a "rupture in its own eucharistic ecclesiology. For it was no longer possible to equate every eucharistic celebration with the local Church." The same was the case with the bishop's absence from most eucharistic celebrations. John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 251.

[11] Schmemann, "Towards a Theology of Councils," 179.

tradition of "Liturgy after the Liturgy,"[12] this eucharistic gathering represents the basis for other charitable and missionary ministries. In parish life, all ministries act together, in coordination with one another, and this common exercise of their responsibilities lies at the heart of synodality.

Even more potent is the liturgical image of the bishop celebrating the Liturgy in a local parish. Although a rare occurrence, it is a powerful image of the church gathered together around its bishop, surrounded by a council of presbyters, deacons, and all the faithful in the celebration of the Eucharist. True, the bishop is never the celebrant of a unique Eucharist that gathers his entire diocese. The parish, not the diocese, is the only place that is suited for Eucharistic celebration. In North America, episcopal cathedrals are in fact parishes with their own priests and communities, so episcopal celebrations always happen in parishes. Today, the entire local diocese gathered in an all-encompassing Eucharist is a historical abstraction.

The parish is not an independent unit. It commemorates the local bishop and cannot celebrate a Liturgy without the *antimesion*, which bears the signature of the local bishop.[13] The parish is part of a larger communion of parishes under the leadership of the bishop, namely the diocese. A diocese is not independent of other dioceses, either, since their bishops belong to the same synod of a national church. A national church is not totally independent from other national churches, either. And the entire Church is dependent on Christ, its head, on the Holy Spirit for continuous inspiration, and the Father as his chosen people.

Furthermore, a mission-oriented parish cannot be an independent unit of the Church. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, said that the world was his parish,[14] which contrasts to those pastors for whom the parish is their world. There are some parishes that are so enclosed within

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[12] The expression "Liturgy after the Liturgy" refers to the Church's service to those who are vulnerable, a service that results from participation in the Eucharist. For more, see Ion Bria, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996). Moreover, John Chrysostom speaks about two altars: one is in the church, and we rightly revere it. The second altar is the poor, the suffering, those in need, the homeless, all who are in distress, and this one we wrongly ignore ("Homily 50, 3–4 on Matthew," in PG 58, 508–509).

[13] The *antimesion* is a rectangular cloth that portrays Jesus' laying in the tomb and without which a Liturgy cannot take place. In the Greek tradition, the emphasis falls on the signature of the bishop on the *antimesion*, while in the Slavonic tradition, it falls on the presence of relics sown into it.

[14] John Wesley said: "seeing I have now no parish …, I look upon all the world as my parish" (*Journal* 3).

themselves that their own community is their whole world, and the prerogative of the bishop is to ensure that the whole world is their responsibility.

Parishes also experience synodality in their common decision-making. The parish council is elected by the community to oversee its day-to-day activity, together with the priest. If in antiquity the bishop was the head of the local church and the *presbyterium* was the college whose functions were counseling and administration,[15] today it is virtually impossible to encounter such practices. However, this structure has shifted to the parish level, where the priest is the spiritual leader while the staff and parish council are involved with counseling and coordinating ministries. It is a misconception that the priest is responsible for spiritual issues and the council is in charge of administrative issues. Although such division of responsibilities has created considerable tensions in the past, as Schmemann points out, he also suggests the solution:

> If indeed the "power of decision," the final responsibility, belongs to the priest, in the process of reaching that decision as truly ecclesial, he needs the help of all, for his power is to express the "mind of the Church". … [T]he *parish council* properly understood is not a committee of practical and business-minded men elected to "manage" the "material interests" of the parish, but the *council* of the priest in all aspects of church life. There should exist indeed a special *rite* of appointing the parish elders to the council, which would express and emphasize the spiritual dimensions of their ministry […]. The conciliar principle which has been "forced" on the parish need not be either rejected or "limited" by reinforcement of "clericalism". It must be *churched*. This means, on the one hand, the acceptance by the clergy of the true hierarchical principle, which is not naked "power" but a deeply spiritual and pastoral concern for the Church as family, as oneness of life and manifestation of the spiritual gifts. … this will take place only when the laity understand that the priest really *needs* them, that he needs, not their "votes", but their talents, their advice, their real "council" or, in other terms, their real participation in the life of the Church.[16]

However, many parishes today have a healthy pastoral life that regards all matters pertaining to the parish as the common task of the entire community. Parishes also hold general assemblies, in which all members of the

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[15] Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 196.
[16] Schmemann, "Towards a Theology of Councils," 178, 80.

parish come together to deliberate on the major aspects of parish life, including the mission of the community, the well-being of its ministries, the approval of the yearly budget, and so on. This is a synodal practice that Orthodox Christians in North America—more than in other parts of the Orthodox world—experience on a regular basis. These considerations about parish synodality are necessary ingredients of a future theology of the parish, but presently non-existent in Orthodoxy theology.

The diocese, too, has a council constituted from among both lay and ordained. It organizes regular clergy-laity assemblies that coordinate the ministries of the diocese, especially youth ministries, charity, and education. While diocesan councils and clergy-laity assemblies are less involved in ministries than their corresponding parish structures, the organization of the local diocese retains an unmistakably synodal character.

Regional Synodality

As our discussion of synodality transitioned from the parish to the diocese, the role of the laity gradually decreased. This same trend is exhibited at regional level, where synodality is manifested primarily through the ministries of the bishops. This transition is somewhat justified, since the bishop is responsible for the interaction with other local churches. And yet, regional synodality in North America involves the laity, deacons and priests, as for example in International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), Orthodox Christian Missions Center (OCMC), Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), all of which transcend ethnic jurisdictional boundaries.

The communion between the clergy and the laity is also manifested synodally in clergy-laity conferences (or sobors) that Orthodox churches of various ethnicities organize in North America. Their authorities vary significantly, some of them entrusting the delegates—laity and parish clergy—with the election of bishops, even though the ultimate decision rests with the synod of bishops.[17] Moreover, in North America there is an Episcopal Assembly that gathers the bishops of different ethnic jurisdictions. Even though it is not a synod in a technical sense, the Episcopal Assembly is a partial (and new) manifestation of synodality, practically dictated by the existence of parallel jurisdictions.

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[17] See 2015 Statute of the OCA V. 6.

Episcopal synodality is most efficient at the level of national, autocephalous churches because it is sustained by primacy. At ecumenical encounters, the Orthodox have insisted on primacy as *primus inter pares* (first among equals), emphasizing the equality of all bishops and being hesitant to recognize more than a primacy of honor rather devoid of authority—unlike the early church, in which the primate had authority with consequences.[18] Internally, however, the Orthodox are not hesitant about primacy. Primates of national churches have a significant degree of authority, including calling the council, setting the agenda, ensuring the participation of the bishops in the council and speaking on behalf of the council once a decision is made—a decision that the entire synod supports publicly. Moreover, the primate represents the national church in its relations with secular authorities and other churches.

This synodal structure is particularly evident when several bishops concelebrate the Divine Liturgy in the order of processions and commemorations, based on their canonical order. When the primate visits another diocese, he is the leader of the eucharistic service, even when the local bishop—who is the head of that specific local church—is present. And yet, other bishops—including the primate—can visit a diocese only at the invitation of the local bishop. Synodality is also manifested in the ancient tradition that ordinations of bishops must involve three (or in special circumstances two) neighboring bishops, in exchange of letters, mutual material assistance, and collaboration on pastoral issues.[19]

Future Directions

As Orthodox theology articulates its view of synodality, several important topics remain and more change is needed. As alluded to above, we need to further define the identity of the parish and to speak theologically about its synodality. This theology in turn requires a balance of baptismal consecration with ordained authority.

History remembers synodality primarily for its doctrinal decisions and it is understandable that in the first centuries we developed the theology of *charisma veritates certum*.[20] But today synodality is primarily about

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[18] See Brian E. Daley, "Position and Patronage in the Early Church: The Original Meaning of 'Primacy of Honour'," *Journal of Theological Studies* 44, no. 2 (1993): 529–53.

[19] Cf. Nicaea I, Canon 4

[20] St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 4, 26, 2.

issues of discipline. How do we need to reimagine *charisma veritates certum*, given that canonical decisions are not regarded as inspired teaching? And in a time when the most creative theologians are not necessarily bishops, as was generally the case in the early Church and when the laity have greater abilities in practical matters than the clergy, a greater participation of theologians and laity in the synodality is necessary.

Moreover, we might ask: how can we include in the entire synodal process—from large-scale consultation to implementation—all the members of our churches, in all their diversity of gender, race, geography, socio-economic background, and pastoral contexts? We have the opportunity to answer these remaining questions about synodality together, clergy and laity, bishops and theologians, East and West. We are pilgrims towards the Kingdom together, walking along the same path (*syn – odos*).

Problems at the Periphery: A Productive Confusion in "The Speech That Got Pope Francis Elected."

Paul Lakeland

Evangelizing presupposes a desire in the Church to come out of herself. The Church is called to come out of herself and to go to the peripheries, not only geographically, but also the existential peripheries: the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference to religion, of intellectual currents, and of all misery. [Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, Address to the College of Cardinals, 2013]

Among the many slogans with which Pope Francis has promoted his vision for the church, none is more likely to be quoted than his call for Christians, whom he has designated "missionary disciples," to go to the periphery. This phrase is to his plan to remake evangelization, what "the smell of the sheep" is to rethinking episcopacy, or "the field hospital" image is for ecclesiology. Indeed, so striking is the image of the periphery that it has already occasioned a number of appreciative studies of its

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impact.[1] All of them are careful to indicate that the notion of the periphery may be understood geographically, socioeconomically, psychologically, and existentially. Those at the margins may be so because they are in remote areas of the world, because they are poor and so rarely come to the attention of the centers of global Catholicism, because they are culturally or socially alienated from all things Catholic or Christian, or because they meet one or more of these criteria. The primary role of the church is to proclaim the good news, reaching out beyond the comfort zone of the local community of faith to those who are at one or other periphery, somehow on the margins, even perhaps marginalized.

Caroline Woo has pointed out that Pope Francis's first public use of the term "periphery" occurred in his address to the College of Cardinals in the days leading up to the conclave which chose him.[2] Many have suggested that it was this speech that in fact led to his election. Though its text has never been officially published, it was eventually released with his approval, using the handwritten notes he had given to Cardinal Jaime Ortega of Havana, Cuba. The four points that Bergoglio made recur throughout the subsequent years. Beginning by arguing that the Church should "take leave of itself and go to the peripheries," he added that he meant this in not only the geographical sense "but also the existential sense, manifested in the mystery of sin, pain, injustice and ignorance, among others," reported Cardinal Ortega. Bergoglio then went on to warn against a "self-referential" church whose thinking is a kind of "theological narcissism," and that such a "worldly" church ends up "living in itself, of itself, for itself." Finally, the cardinal soon to be elected pope said he expected the new pontiff to be "a man who, from the contemplation of

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[1] Andrea Riccardi, *To the Margins: Pope Francis and the Mission of the Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2018); Pasquale Ferrara, "The Concept of Periphery in Pope Francis' Discourse: A Religious Alternative to Globalization?" *Movement Politics and Policy for Unity* at: http://www.mppu.org/en/archive/point-of-view/910-the-concept-of-periphery-in-pope-francis-discourse-a-religious-alternative-to-globalization.html (accessed February 17, 2020) Richard R. Gaillardetz, "The Francis Moment: A New Kairos for Catholic Ecclesiology." Presidential address, *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America*, 69 (2014) at: https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ctsa/article/view/5509 (accessed February 17, 2020); T. Bilocura, "Pope Francis, Christian Mission, and the Church of St. Francis," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 37, no. 3, (2013) at https://doi.org/10.1177%2F239693931303700309 (accessed February 17, 2020).

[2] "Periphery," in *A Pope Francis Lexicon*, edited by Joshua J. McElwee and Cindy Wooden (Collegeville, Minn., Liturgical, 2018), 142.

Jesus Christ […] helps the Church to emerge from itself to arrive at the existential limits".[3]

While Francis's notion of the periphery has all the values for the work of the church that he imagines and that the scholars listed in footnote one have identified and expanded upon, this does not mean that the image is entirely transparent. For one thing, this kind of evangelical focus can come into conflict with the more generous visions of a theology of grace which, since the Second Vatican Council at least, have clearly imagined grace present and active in all human beings. Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, is explicit on this point (LG 13–17), even if it continues to use the language of "raising up" or "perfecting" the intimations of divine grace present in all the great world religions and available even to atheists and agnostics. So while this does not disqualify missionary outreach, it suggests chastening the enthusiasm that too easily imagines itself enlightening the darkness of pagan sinfulness or the not-so-blissful ignorance of the noble savage.

If the pope's insistence on reaching out to the periphery and overcoming the sterility of self-referentiality represents a long-overdue return to a focus on evangelization rather than doctrine, the way in which evangelical outreach occurs will vary depending on its target audience.[4] The poor of Latin America need the outreach of accompaniment, in which the church shares their burdens and insists on overcoming their marginality. Those of any socioeconomic class who have abandoned their religious practice out of anger at the sins of the church or secularized indifference need to be confronted with a church that is penitent and open to hear their concerns. The great mass of the nones who proclaim that they are spiritual but not religious need to be affirmed in their genuine embrace of the holy. But the most nimble and perhaps most challenging of outreach must surely be to

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[3] https://cathcon.blogspot.com/2013/03/full-text-papacy-winning-speech-of.html (accessed February 17, 2020).

[4] The forthcoming Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* on reform of the Roman Curia promises to institutionalize this new set of priorities, in all probability by placing the dicastery for evangelization above that of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The document will be promulgated once the Pope's team of cardinals are satisfied with final text, probably some time in 2020. See Austin Ivereigh's account in *Commonweal* (https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/evangelization-first) and a short explanation of the delay in promulgation from Hannah Brockhaus at the Catholic News Agency at: https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/release-of-new-curial-constitution-delayed-again-54888 (both accessed February 17, 2020).

those whom Pope Francis slips into the quote at the head of this paper, almost unnoticed. Who are those whose difference lies in "intellectual currents," and how should they be approached? If your distinction from the Catholic Church is not predicated on a reaction *against*, but on a positive choice *for* something other, what is happening when you are reached by a church that is talking the language of center and periphery, and classifying you as the latter?

The theological language in which the question of outreach to those intellectually committed elsewhere has to be framed is that of the dialectic of grace and evangelization. *Lumen gentium* 13–17, mentioned above, is clear that all human beings are called to the "catholic unity" of the new people of God, and "in different ways to it belong, or are related: the Catholic faithful, others who believe in Christ, and finally all mankind, called by God's grace to salvation" (LG 13). While behind this statement we can see Karl Rahner's vision of the universal offer of salvation,[5] the same theological challenge goes back to the beginnings of the church. The call to Christians is to proclaim the good news of the gospel, but the grace of God is ubiquitous, present everywhere in all human beings, and in play in their various religious perspectives. So, for example, in Acts 10:34 we see that Peter knows that Christ has commissioned us "to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead." He is the carrier and perhaps the embodiment of "the word [God] sent to the Israelites." But Peter precedes all of this with the proclamation that "God shows no partiality," and thus that "in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him." The Christian tradition stretching from the first century to the present, then, has to ask a complex question about the role of evangelization, and in a particular way when we confront "intellectual currents" at the existential periphery. How must our evangelical posture be conditioned by the recognition that what we have to offer is not being presented to a *tabula rasa*? The grace of God has been at work from the beginning of time in human aspirations to all that is good and holy, and the good news of the gospel has to respect that historical and theological reality.

When scrutinizing the wording of Bergoglio's address more closely, then, it is clear that the phrase "intellectual currents" stands out as opaque,

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[5] See for example "Church, Churches and Religions," in Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Volume X, "Writings of 1965-67, 2" (New York: Seabury, 1977), 30–49.

even a little troubling. Francis is listing the characteristics of *existential peripheries*, to which the church needs to respond with evangelical zeal. The other items on his list of existential peripheries are "mysteries" in need of the healing power of the good news: sin, pain, injustice, ignorance, indifference to religion (perhaps), and "all misery." Intellectual currents, to the contrary, are ideas or sets of ideas whose proponents have arrived at them in the search for truth that human reason drives towards, and which in Catholic teaching cannot be in conflict with the gospel. Evangelization, the proclamation of the good news that God is love, reaches out to heal all those in need, whether material or spiritual. But when the existential periphery is populated by people or cultures whose values and principles differ from those of the Christian church, a wholly different kind of approach is called for, one which goes by the name of dialogue. And dialogue, of course, is only true dialogue when the perspective each brings to the encounter is in some sense at least provisional. If we are not open to a truth from the other that might cause us to revise our own position, then there is no true dialogue.

Francis' reference to intellectual currents provides no specifics, but it is not unreasonable to speculate that he has mind some contemporary modes of thought which trouble him. Some of them are central to the predicament of the contemporary world, among them his concerns with the many aspects of neoliberalism that are his particular target in *Laudato Si'* and the attendant forms of nationalism or racism that have both caused the refugee crisis and singularly failed to address it. Others, however, are more problematic, especially his frontal attack on gender theory, which demonstrates both serious ignorance of its particulars and the abandonment of the posture of dialogue which has to attend encounter with the other, at whatever existential periphery. In an interview published in a 2014 book the pope offers two examples of movements defying the order of creation: "Let's think of the nuclear arms, of the possibility to annihilate in a few instants a very high number of human beings," he begins, and then adds, "Let's think also of genetic manipulation, of the manipulation of life, or of the gender theory, that does not recognize the order of creation." So while he has a record of pastoral sensitivity to the LGBTQ community, his sensitivity seems not to extend to movements that challenge gender identity.[6] One could see here either the limits of Francis's exposure to those

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[6] Andrea Tornielli and Giacomo Galeazzi, *This Economy Kills: Pope Francis on Capitalism and Social Justice* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2015), 150.

who further this particular intellectual current, or perhaps simply the total failure of the church through several papacies to dialogue with those who cannot accept the consequences of the church's "natural law" bioethics. Either way, Francis must surely know that dialogue cannot be foreclosed without abandoning the outreach to the existential periphery.

One way to move forward to resolve the question of how to dialogue with those whose intellectual convictions do not clearly harmonize with the Christian gospel might be to recognize that "center" and "periphery" are relative and not absolute terms. The only absolute center is God, who shows no partiality. When we go out from our Christian center to proclaim the good news to those whose intellectual position is different, perhaps dramatically so, we encounter another reality which to itself is the center, and for whom we are visitors from the periphery. And the center from which we go is itself not *the* center, but provisional to the absolute center of God, just as all the peripheries which we reach out to, which consider themselves centers, are provisional too. In other words, aside from God, there is only provisionality. Pope emeritus Benedict addressed this challenge directly in his remarks on the special relationship between Jews and Christians,[7] arguing that dialogue and not mission is the correct word to use, following the argument made in a 2015 document of the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.[8] But

[7] In a written clarification to an article in *Herder Korrespondenz* implying the opposite. See https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2018-11/pope-emeritus-benedict-dialogue-with-the-jews-not-mission.html. (accessed February 17, 2020).

[8] Entitled, "The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable" at: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20151210_ebraismo-nostra-aetate_en.html#6._The_Church%E2%80%99s_mandate_to_evangelize_in_relation_to_Judaism (accessed February 17, 2020). The actual words of the Commission's explication are worth quoting at length: "It is easy to understand that the so–called 'mission to the Jews' is a very delicate and sensitive matter for Jews because, in their eyes, it involves the very existence of the Jewish people. This question also proves to be awkward for Christians, because for them the universal salvific significance of Jesus Christ and consequently the universal mission of the Church are of fundamental importance. The Church is therefore obliged to view evangelisation to Jews, who believe in the one God, in a different manner from that to people of other religions and world views. In concrete terms this means that the Catholic Church neither conducts nor supports any specific institutional mission work directed towards Jews. While there is a principled rejection of an institutional Jewish mission, Christians are nonetheless called to bear witness to their faith in Jesus Christ also to Jews, although they should do so in a humble and sensitive manner, acknowledging that Jews are bearers of God's Word, and particularly in view of the great tragedy of the Shoah" (section 40).

perhaps it is necessary to ask whether in light of the universal availability of divine grace it is appropriate to make such a special case of the Jews. Their story is surely closest to that of the Christian tradition, but we might do well to reflect on a remark in section 42 of this Vatican document, that states that "Christians must put their trust in God, who will carry out his universal plan of salvation in ways that only he knows, for they are witnesses to Christ, but they do not themselves have to implement the salvation of humankind." Or, in other words, evangelization of the existential periphery may need to be salted quite heavily with humility. Whatever it is that we bring to the existential periphery, it cannot be old-fashioned apologetics.

A second way to look beyond old-style evangelization is actually offered in the Bergoglio speech. The notion of the church "coming out of herself," of abandoning self-referentiality, is one that Francis has subsequently stressed time and again. At one level this is a simple call to abandon ecclesial navel-gazing in order to focus on the church as missionary. But the implications are much greater when we focus on his call for the church "to take leave of itself." This suggests a more kenotic posture in which the church will carry its message to a periphery at which it will not appear as "church" but as simply the active presence of the revelation of the love of God. In other words, the centripetal tendency to be self-involved as a church must be all but obliterated by a centrifugal act of self-abandonment. The age-old stress on the church as the place of salvation needs to disappear, to be replaced perhaps by the biblical image of the community of faith as the leaven in the mass. Hidden in the whole of creation in humble service to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, recognizing that God's self-emptying in the Incarnation mandates the self-emptying of the church in service of its mission. The missionary disciple, then, preaches in the mode of transparency. When the fact that God is love is seen in or, better, through the encounter with the Christian, then the gospel is proclaimed. Christ is present, even namelessly so, when the transparency of Christian mission allows the love of God to shine through. As Pope Francis said in Mozambique in September, 2019, "St. Francis of Assisi told his friars: 'Go out to the world, evangelize. And, if necessary, use words too.' Evangelization is essentially witness."[9] But far from Tertullian's "see how

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[9] *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 26 September 2019, available on-line at: https://www.laciviltacat-tolica.com/the-sovereignty-of-the-people-of-god-the-pontiff-meets-the-jesuits-of-mozam-bique-and-madagascar/ (accessed February 17, 2020).

they love one another," Pope Francis offers "see how they love the whole created world!"

This radical re-ordering of theological priorities from doctrine to a kenotic evangelization implies major ecclesial changes which cannot be explored in detail here. In light of *Laudato Si'* in particular, the face of the church must become one of witness to the will of God for the harmony of the created order, manifested to Christians in the gift of love that is the meaning of Christ. Humble reflection of the love of God for creation has to be the face of the missionary disciple. The role of Rome as the symbol of the unity of the global church can only be to support the grassroots mission of loving engagement with all God's creatures in defense of the world which is our common home. This is the one way to proclaim the good news. Everything else is there to support this ecclesial vision. The church is perhaps being called to die to its old self, to be the grain of wheat whose death will bring forth new life. Perhaps we could call this a paschal ecclesiology.

Milestones for the Next Council: Conciliar Experiences and Global Synodality

Luc Forestier

Before formulating his conclusion, in the last sentences of his forceful little book about the last three councils of the Roman Catholic Church, John O'Malley proffered a caveat and a prediction: "Will there be another ecumenical council? If tradition has any force in the Catholic church, the answer has to be a resounding affirmative. But, as the above considerations make clear, serious questions about its location, its membership, about how it might handle the large number of bishops and other potential participants, and about the precise form it might take hang in the air. Stay tuned."[1] While the exact meaning of the word "ecumenical" may of course be ambiguous, O'Malley's main assertion challenges ecclesiologists. How can we imagine the future "ecumenical" council, that is, the next worldwide meeting of church leaders in order to outline changes in the life of the churches, both on pastoral and doctrinal levels?

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[1] John O'Malley, *When Bishops Meet. An Essay Comparing Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap Press, 2019), 209.

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In 2005, under Benedict XVI's pontificate, the principal conviction of Gilles Routhier about this issue was a historical one: "To put it bluntly, thinking about the holding of a council in the present situation puts us in such a situation of invention that recourse to history, which John XXIII, who had studied the history of councils, liked to call 'mistress of wisdom', seems necessary today to make our imaginations more fruitful."[2] In his contribution, Routhier went back to the first centuries of Christianity, looking for criteria that would enable us to imagine new forms of conciliarity for different families of churches.

Yet the history of the 1925 anniversary of the first ecumenical council of Nicaea (325) may help us to discover a concrete step toward this imagination of new conciliar institutions which the churches need today, in order to go further in the mission they receive from God.

1925, A Separated Anniversary

In the history of the Ecumenical Movement, the first meeting of *Life and Work* in Stockholm (1925) is always praised as a decisive step toward the constitution of the World Council of Churches in 1949. For example, the prominent French Protestant leader Wilfrid Monod (1867–1943) spoke about his participation in this meeting as the "the holiest and most victorious joy" of his whole life.[3] Yet, from the Catholic side, the impressions were mixed as is revealed in the long article in *Les Études*, a journal edited by the Jesuits since 1856. The absence of doctrinal agreement was severely denounced: despite a vague religiosity, "it is untrue that the 600 members of the Conference were united by the same faith in the same Christ"[4] since, sixteen centuries after the Council of Nicaea, they wanted to remain completely silent about any doctrinal issues concerning the divinity of Christ.[5]

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[2] Gilles Routhier, "Le rêve d'un nouveau concile," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 93, no. 2 (2005): 247–65, here 265.

[3] Laurent Gagnebin, "Wilfred Monod et l'œcuménisme," *Autres Temps. Les cahiers du christianisme social* 23 (1989): 50–53, here 51.

[4] Paul Dudon, "La conférence chrétienne de Stockholm (19–30 août 1925)," *Études*, 185 (1925): 652.

[5] In a book written when he was young, Charles Journet (1891–1975) stated that Protestants only promoted "a humanism coloured by evangelism". Quoted by Daniel Moulinet, "Réactions catholiques face aux tentatives d'union des Églises au début du xxᵉ siècle," *Histoire et missions chrétiennes* 13 (2010): 137–54, here 151.

Indeed, faced with these ecumenical initiatives which brought together not only Protestant but also Orthodox delegates, Pius XI (reigned 1922–1939) reinforced the "unionist" politics of the Catholic Church. Historians have studied this broad movement, born in the nineteenth century, whose purpose was to facilitate the incorporation of non-Catholics into the Catholic Church, both of individuals and communities, beginning with Eastern churches and Anglicans.[6] In 1928, Pius XI denounced any attempt to create federations of churches from these "pan-Christians" without any doctrinal unity. His conclusion was incisive: "it is clear why this Apostolic See has never allowed its subjects to take part in the assemblies of non-Catholics: for the union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it, for in the past they have unhappily left it."[7]

Yet, far from the strong Latinization which characterized the different attempts of the preceding centuries, this Catholic insistence on "union" with Rome sought to respect the liturgical and disciplinary traditions, especially of Eastern churches. Thus, the anniversary of Nicaea was celebrated in November 1925 with a solemn week of liturgies in the Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran.[8] Catholic representatives of each Oriental rite celebrated the profession of the Nicene faith, and eventually Pius XI presided at a Byzantine liturgy in Saint Peter's Basilica on 15 November 1925. Even if the Creed was recited in Latin,[9] this first Oriental liturgy at the main altar of the Vatican basilica was acclaimed as a concrete sign of the equality of all rites in the Catholic church: "now as before the disastrous separation which must cease, there are no more superior nor inferior rites. All are equal."[10]

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[6] Laura Pettinaroli, "Pontifical Unionism from Pius IX to Pius X," in *A History of the Desire for Christian Unity. Ecumenism in the Churches (19th-21st century)*, edited by Alberto Melloni (Leiden, Brill, forthcoming 2020).

[7] Pius XI, *Mortalium animos* (6 January 1928), n. 10.

[8] An important historical source is a journal edited for the occasion by the Congregation for the Oriental Churches: *Bollettino per la Commemorazione del XVI° Centenario del Concilio di Nicea*, with 6 issues in 1925–1926.

[9] However, concerning the solemn liturgy of Pentecost (31 May 1925), another "unionist" journal reported that Greeks also prayed the Nicene Creed in Greek without the "Filioque". Cf. *Stoudion*, 2 (1925): 83–84.

[10] See the unsigned article in this Byzantine Catholic journal: "La commémoraison solennelle du premier concile œcuménique de Nicée le 15 novembre 1925 dans la basilique de Saint-Pierre à Rome," *Stoudion*, 2 (1925): 206–207.

Not only was 1925 an extraordinary year for the Catholic church in Rome with the first Jubilee of the twentieth century, the Vatican Missionary Exhibition, the encyclical *Quas primas* (December 11, 1925) establishing the Feast of Christ the King, and, after some hesitation, Pius XI's renunciation of completing Vatican I, the sixteenth anniversary of the first "ecumenical" Council of Nicaea was also the occasion for different initiatives in the dioceses, even if the main emphasis was always placed on visible communion with the Pope.

This unionist tendency is clearly perceptible in the Catholic journals when they describe the celebration of the Nicene anniversary in other churches, especially when discussing Anglican initiatives. Indeed, relationships between Orthodoxy and Anglicanism were closer in the nineteenth century thanks to the Oxford Movement, and strengthened in the twentieth century, not only in the Middle East where the British influence was pivotal, but also in the Russian diaspora after 1917.[11] These cultural and theological contacts were scrutinized by Catholics since they feared a mutual recognition of ordinations.[12]

Hence the Catholic accounts of the solemn liturgy on June 29, 1925, in London sought to disqualify *rapprochements* between Anglican and Orthodox prelates. During the Latin mass of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, presided by the Archbishop of Canterbury, even if the Anglican liturgy preserves the Western version, the Orthodox prelates prayed the Nicene Creed in Greek without the "Filioque". A columnist concluded that this "meeting of representatives from churches so multifarious and so divided showed how artificial was this summit."[13]

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[11] N. Lossky, "L'Église d'Angleterre et l'orthodoxie russe: quelques exemples de relations," *Revue des études slaves*, 70, no. 2 (1998): 469–476.

[12] In the journal of the Protestant faculty of theology in Strasbourg, Edouard Platzhoff-Lejeune described the situation of Anglicanism after the Lambeth Conference of 1920: "It is not impossible that within a couple of decades, thanks to Lambeth [conferences], we will reach an *anti-Roman block* which will include the majority of Christian churches in the world" (E. Platzhoff-Lejeune, "Chronique. L'Anglicanisme d'aujourd'hui," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 1, no. 3 (1921): 291–294, here 291). This idea was also asserted in a polemical brochure of Sidney Herbert Scott, *Anglo-Catholicism and reunion* (London, R. Scott, 1923) quoted by Joseph Wadoux in *Documentation Catholique*, 14 (1925): 1023: "Union will probably come through the participation of Eastern prelates (whose Orders are not discussed in Rome) in Anglican ordinations, with the result that the entire Anglican clergy will eventually receive orders that Rome cannot discuss."

[13] J. Lacombe, "Chronique des Églises orientales. 1. Les Églises orientales à Londres et à Stockholm," *Échos d'Orient*, 24, no. 4 (1925): 492.

On a more theological level, even if *rapprochements* between Anglicanism and Orthodoxy were not ultimately conclusive, the sixteenth centenary of Nicaea has been a clear demonstration of disunion. Catholic presentations of the Council of Nicaea insisted on the Roman influence: some scholars asserted that the Nicene Creed was directly influenced by Roman liturgical life whereas others sought to prove the influence of the Pope.[14]

To conclude about this centenary, in order to prepare for the next one in 2025, separation and confrontation were the main characteristics of the different initiatives, both on pastoral and theological levels. In the Catholic Church, the main feature was Roman centralization, especially with the Missionary Exhibition and the celebrations for the sixteenth centenary of Nicaea. In the Orthodox churches, the emphasis was much more ecumenical, especially thanks to the Encyclical of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (January 1920) which issued an invitation to establish a *koinonia* of churches.[15] It can be noted that the Encyclical used the same Greek word to designate also the League of Nations which had been founded after World War I. As centralization in the Catholic Church, this ambivalence in the use of *koinonia* is a sign of the weight of geopolitical factors in the celebration of this centenary. The consequences of aggressive nationalism had been different. On the one side, the part of the Roman See had been reinforced with a Pope above nations and liturgical rites. On the other side, both Protestant and Orthodox, ecumenism had been understood as the only way to fight again the temptations of isolationism. Yet, despite the importance of geopolitical factors today, the 2025 centenary raises other critical questions.

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[14] V. Grumel, "Le siège de Rome et le concile de Nicée. Convocation et présidence," *Échos d'Orient*, 24, no. 4 (1925): 411–423. Yet Grumel's conclusion was more modest than the title seemed to imply: "Only the confirmation of the council belongs to the Apostolic See, and this is sufficient to make our council ecumenical and to protect the essential prerogatives of the Bishop of Rome." (423)

[15] Text and presentation in Gennadios Limouris (ed.), *Orthodox Visions of Ecumenism. Statements, Messages and reports of the Ecumenical Movement, 1902–1992* (Geneva, WCC Publications, 1994), 9–11.

2025, a Decisive Step Toward the Next Ecumenical Council?

In 2025 we will celebrate the seventeenth centenary of the first ecumenical council of Nicaea: on what conditions might it be an effective step toward a new ecumenical council? While such a question raises significant issues which go beyond this ecclesiological contribution, the historical testimonies of the sixteenth centenary can help us to discern some of the main problems with which a theology of the councils must deal.

Considering our globalized world, political factors in the life of the churches seem weightier in 2020 than in the 1920s. And the chief question is the relationship between politics and ecclesiology since it is always possible to deny to political questions any theological relevance. This was for long the case in Catholic theology when, for example, the doctrinal growth of the papacy in the nineteenth century was attributed only to the hermeneutics of Matthew 16 or John 21 without any regard for the political question of the *Risorgimento* which led ultimately to the disappearance of the Papal States.

Using the method of the "signs of the times", Vatican II's pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* proposed another direction for the relationship between political context and ecclesiological elaboration. Far from a naive confusion between progress and signs of the times, *Gaudium et Spes* sect. 4 states that "the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel." This discernment of events leads the church to "decipher authentic signs of God's presence and purpose" (sect. 11) which implies discerning between authentic and inauthentic signs. In the Roman Catholic Church, Francis' encyclical *Laudato si'* is an example of discernment which a theology of the councils would have to universalize. This political analysis of our world could help churches become more conscious of the influences that governments, state agencies, lobbies, global companies, media, social networks, etc., may exert on the next ecumenical council.

Political factors are not the only ones which explain the divisive nature of the anniversary of 1925. Theological issues such as the question of the divinity of Christ were also at stake. For example, during the solemn celebration in London a difference was made between prelates from the Orthodox and pre-Chalcedonian churches. This raises two different questions: about the churches and about their ministers. Any celebration of Nicaea must indeed consider the situation of the churches which do not

recognize the authority of some of the early councils, especially for doctrinal reasons. For example, ecumenical discussions with Orthodox Oriental churches have been fruitful, which has led to the recognition that the divisions could also have political and cultural causes. The official dialogue between Orthodox and pre-Chalcedonian churches has concluded that "both families have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological faith."[16] From this point of view, it is important to note that some of the more recent churches, even if their main emphasis is biblical, are looking to understand what the conciliar tradition means for themselves.[17]

Hence the next centenary of Nicaea could be a good opportunity to stimulate ecumenical questions regarding the diverse receptions of the Council. More fundamentally, it becomes necessary to consider the status of the participants at such an ecumenical council. Even if in the Catholic, Orthodox, and other Oriental churches, the answer seems to be clear, many questions still present: what might be the participation of titular bishops, that is, bishops who rule no church but are auxiliary or emeritus bishops? Moreover, what might the effective participation of the laity be? How is it possible to go beyond a male-only participation?

And the question becomes more acute considering other churches whose conceptions of ministry are diverse, even if similar issues are at stake, about male or female participation, about relationships between ministers and laity, and about supranational forms of synodality.[18]

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[16] Second Agreed Statement and Recommendations to the Churches (Chambésy, Switzerland, 1990), no. 9 in Jeffrey Gros, Harding Meyer and William G. Rusch (eds.), *Growth in agreement II. Reports and agreed statements of ecumenical conversations on a world level, 1982–1998* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans; Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2000), 196. See Job Getcha, "L'Église orthodoxe en dialogue. Rétrospective des cinquante dernières années, in *Nouveaux territoires de l'œcuménisme. Déplacements depuis 50 ans et appels pour l'avenir,* edited by Luc Forestier (Paris, Cerf, 2019), 27.

[17] An illustration is to be found in some communities of messianic Jews, who have primarily a Protestant background. See Mark S. Kinzer, *Searching Her Own Mystery: Nostra Aetate, the Jewish People, and the Identity of the Church* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015). In the Appendix 4, "Finding our way through Nicaea," *Kesher* 24 (2010): 29–52 and translated into Italian in *Rassegna di Teologia* 53, no. 4 (2012): 601–624, Kinzer explains the reasons for Messianic Jews' refusal of Nicaea, and proposes a way for his community to understand the Nicene Creed.

[18] See the example of the governance (Presbyterian and synodal) of the United Protestant Church of France: Jean-Daniel Roque, *La grâce et l'ordre. Le régime presbytérien synodal* (Lyon, Olivétan, 2018). Within the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), one of the questions is the "conciliarity", that is, the invention of a synodality at the European

Whatever the answers to such questions might be, it is obvious that the next ecumenical council will gather thousands of people from all over the world. This raises tricky questions of organization. Even if the Roman centralization of the Catholic Church is moderated by other churches, the question of the place for such a meeting remains complex, especially on the ecological level. Certainly, it would be possible to organize simultaneous conciliar assemblies on different continents, but the dependence on technical solutions does not completely obviate the risks of political interference.

It is not yet possible to figure out a representation for the next ecumenical council: some ecclesiological questions must first become clearer. The seventeenth centenary of the first ecumenical council of Nicaea is an occasion for pastoral initiatives. Meanwhile, ecclesiology must prepare the way by offering new interpretations of the conciliar existence of the church in the various Christian confessions. For the Roman Catholic Church, an extensive movement has been launched by Pope Francis toward a more synodal church.[19] This movement will have unpredictable consequences for the Catholic conceptions of councils. From parish life to the global church, synodality is the keystone for changes.

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level which is not yet realized. See the document "Church communion", adopted by the Eighth General Assembly of the CPCE: https://cpce-assembly.eu/dokumente/?lang=en (accessed February 13, 2020). See sect. 80: "There has certainly never been a council of the CPCE. However, through the resolutions of the synods (or the corresponding bodies) to declare and realize church communion, the CPCE churches are no longer in a pre-conciliar situation, as is the case in most other ecumenical dialogues between churches. The situation of the CPCE is conciliar, but without a common synod."

[19] A. C. Osheim, "Stepping toward a Synodal Church," *Theological Studies* 80, no. 2 (2019): 370–392.

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.